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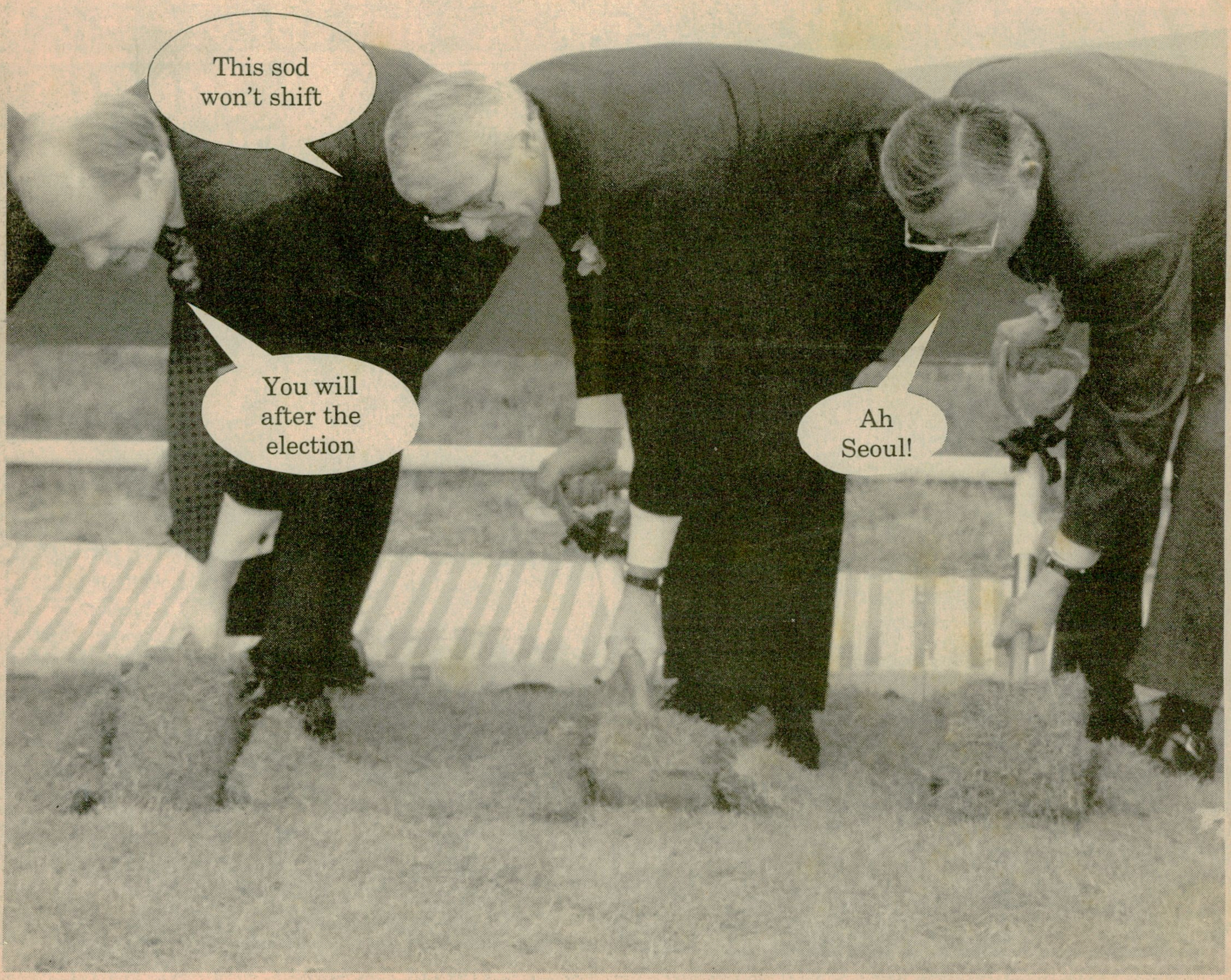

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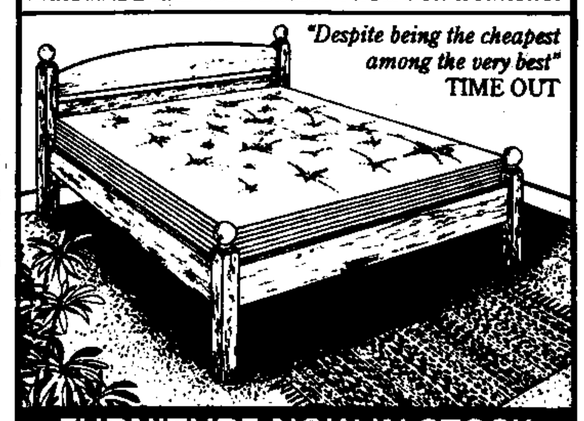

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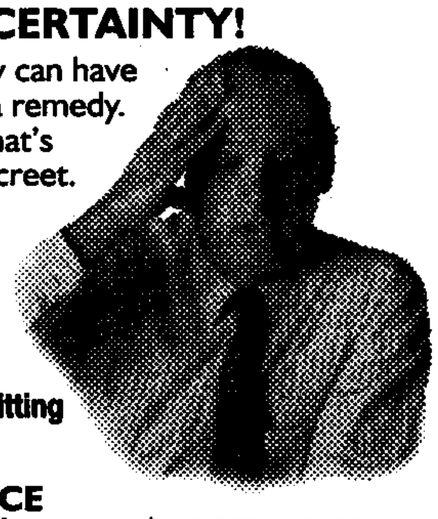

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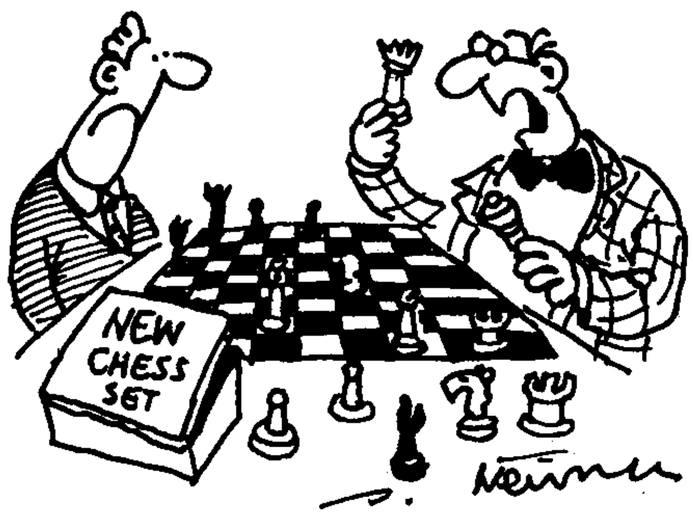

"There's the King and the King's bit on the side"

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COLOUR SECTION

IF John Major really is going to go to the country in March, Tory central office may have to act fast to provide completely new candidates in some safe seats.

Tatton, for instance, has one of the biggest Tory majorities in the country (15,860). Beaconsfield has an even bigger one, 23,597. Brigg and Cleethorpes (9,269) would normally be considered safe. But the candidates for all three seats are sitting MPs who are wetting their pants waiting for the results of the inquiry by Sir Gordon Downey, the parliamentary commissioner for standards.

After a sticky start, the inquiry has been bowling along nicely. Although Neil Hamilton (Tatton) still insists he did not get any envelopes full of Fayed money to ask questions and lobby ministers for Fayed interests, Downey has already seen the three witnesses to the payments, and the prospects for the bumptious MP seem bleak.

Not much more optimistic are Tim Smith (Beaconsfield) and Michael Brown (Brigg and Cleethorpes), who were keen activists for Ian Greer and his clients. Sir Gordon is expected to take pity on other MPs, like Gerald Malone and Lady Olga Maitland, who were also close to Greer; but Hamilton, Smith and Brown seem likely casualties.

Assuming, as he predicts, that Sir Gordon can get his report out by the end of February (when the election campaign may be starting) how will the dissolved House respond? Will it bar the Greermen from further parliamentary office — or allow them to fight the election and take their seats to await their colleagues' censure?

Mr Hamilton, at any rate, is leaving no stone unturned. He regularly visits bookshops in Tatton to warn proprietors that he will "sue the pants" off them unless they withdraw copies of the recent *Guardian/Observer* book on sleaze. Few bookshop managers have responded. After all, they argue, did he not sue the *Guardian* and lose his own pants?

CAMPAIGNERS fighting to keep open the accident and emergency department at Edgware hospital have received fresh hope.

The government's decision to move emergency cases to Barnet raised fierce opposition from local Hendon North Tory MP John Gorst. But it is not Gorst's intervention the campaigners are pinning their hopes on.

Mrs Hilda Howard, 85-year-old mother of home secretary Michael Howard, recently fell down the steps of Stanmore Synagogue and banged her head. Luckily for Hilda, Edgware casualty unit was still in operation and she was rushed there for treatment. Her loving son Michael visited his mother and was impressed by the treatment she had received. Time for a last minute reprieve, Mr Howard?

JOHN GUMMER is considering reopening the inquiry into a nuclear waste dump at Sellafield following the "defection" of his own former top expert, Sir John Knill.

Sir John, chair of the radioactive waste management advisory committee until a year ago, has written to him urging him to abandon the plan because the nuclear industry gave false evidence (HP Sauce, 10 and 24 January). Gummer now says he is thinking about it. About time, too.

Funnily enough this is a replay of 1 May 1987 when the government abandoned the idea of sinking exploratory boreholes at four sites. One of them was in the Colchester constituency of John (now Lord) Wakeham, later energy secretary, who made it plain he wasn't having any. The date was four weeks before a general election.

Knill, an honest civil engineer, originally supported the idea of a dump but has been driven into opposition by the gradual exposure of the facts — chiefly that the nuclear industry has not told the truth.

WHY is APCO UK, one of the newest lobbying companies, spending so much money on the *New Statesman*? In the past few months it has sponsored a "new" Labour wall-chart, a Fantasy Politics game and even a joint web site.

Could there be a link between the *NS* carrying adverts for the Tobacco Alliance (see page 2 of the 24 January issue) and the help it gets from APCO, whose main client just happens to be Philip Morris, the maker of Marlboro? Obviously not.

Or could it be that the managing director of APCO, Simon Milton, understands that the Tories are going to lose the election and that APCO needs to start sucking up to the "new" Labour establishment? Milton certainly has keen political antennae: he is a Conservative candidate (in Leicester), a former deputy leader of Westminster council and an ex-director of, ahem, Ian Greer Associates.

PROF Stephen Littlechild, electricity regulator, has moved into politics and told Labour: if you impose a windfall tax on electricity companies, they may pass it on to the customers — and I may allow them to.

His open defiance of the opposition came in evidence to the select committee on trade and industry. He said his decision would depend on the case the companies would make out and it was "not impossible" the consumer would have to pay higher prices to allow the utilities to pay their tax.

He added, in a clear warning to a Labour chancellor, that he would not expect the government to tax the companies so much they would need to pass on the cost and he would tell the government "the business realities". That means he has set what he considers fair price controls, and no one should muck about with them.

The scene is being set for an enjoyable head-on collision between a Labour government and Littlechild, the most senior of the regulators. He is buoyed by the knowledge, first made public in the *Eye* in February 1993, that it is almost impossible to fire him except for "incapacity or misbehaviour". This was written into the electricity act to make him "independent". That means independent of any government he does not like. He is an ardent Tory.

● *Hacks win Blottery* 6
● *Polly, Gordy and Mandy* 8
● *The Cook, the 'Copter, the Ex-Cop and the Judge* 14
● *Whitemoor Farce — Footnotes* 26

"Henceforth there shall be two Quests for the Holy Grail a week!"

Street of Shame

CAMELOT's publicity gurus thought they had pulled off a master stroke when they invited British tabloid lottery hacks on a beano to Dublin.

The purpose of the visit was for the hacks to see for themselves exactly how much they could drink while observing the terribly important Irish lottery — which has absolutely no relevance to Camelot's UK lottery whatsoever. As a by-product, the beano was a chance for Camelot to get British hacks on side before the launch of the mid-week lottery, which would be greeted with reams of favourable publicity.

Everything went well until the hacks arrived at their restaurant after a hard day of lottery watching. After a few courses some of them became tired and emotional, and a row developed between the *Sun*'s Lenny Lottery and the *Daily Mirror*'s David Pilditch over who wrote the better [*sic*] lottery stories. When fists were threatened, the pair were separated and taken on to a nightclub.

En route to the club, the escorting public relations woman had to save a particularly emotional hack from falling into the Liffey. Eventually, however, all made their way back to their hotel, where anxious staff asked them if they were with "those two men outside" as they were about to call the police. Lurching to the window the hacks saw Lenny Lottery lying on the steps of the hotel, with the *Mirror*'s David Pilditch sitting on top of him shaking him by the throat.

The two were separated and sent to bed leaving Camelot's PR woman wailing: "What have we done? They used to be such good friends."

NOT SO YOUNG Telegraph

TAKE It To The Limit was the title of a 1970s pop song — and should serve as the Prime Minister's motto as he ponders the date of the next general election.

— First leader, *The Daily Telegraph*.

● ***£10 paid for similar examples.***

POOR Charles Moore will go to any lengths, it seems, to boost the *Daily Telegraph*'s circulation figures and revenue in his attempt to stay ahead of the *Times*.

At a recent debate sponsored by none other than *Living Marxism*, Moore turned up to speak on "Is there room for religion in politics?" Speaking alongside a representative from the Demos think tank and a Living Marxism columnist, Moore looked uncomfortable but at the end of the meeting his purpose became clearer.

The chair of the meeting rose to say: "Charles would like everyone to know that anyone placing an order in the *Telegraph*'s Valentine's Day classified column will win a free ticket on Eurostar."

"SOCIALIST" peer and puritanical *Express* boss Lord "Alco" Hollick is a dedicated supporter of "new" Labour and thus believes in fair and humane treatment of "the workers". But those who work for him might disagree.

While he organised the recent report by "leading businessmen" advocating a minimum wage and adherence to the social chapter, there seems to be a gap between theory and practice. Until last year, there were 27 security guards at the *Express*. In a purge a few months ago, all but six were replaced by casuals. Then, in the early hours of Saturday 25 January, one of the remaining six staffers was coming to the end of his night shift when he was suddenly ordered to leave the building. "When you get home," he was told, "you'll find a letter delivered by courier."

It was a dismissal letter. His five colleagues were sacked the same way that day (one returned from holiday to find the note stuffed in his letter-box), as was long-serving security manager Chris Harris. None was allowed to return to the office to collect their belongings.

The *Express* has now recruited a motley crew of temps and part-timers, including an Australian backpacker. No doubt they are all highly professional; but it didn't inspire confidence when one, working a night shift, was found asleep on the editorial floor.

"Try to laugh, dear. He was in the Footlights, you know"

THE miserable, shrinking handful of hacks at David "Rommel" Montgomery's cash-starved *Independent on Sunday* are getting rather tired of the repeated assertions by editor Rosie Boycott that she will pay for pictures and stories out of her own pocket if necessary (see *Eye* 916).

When the paper was "redesigned" two weeks ago and a new, inaptly-named section called "Spending" added, Rosie told the chief sub-editor that it would be in order for a couple of additional casual subs to be booked to handle the extra work over the relaunch period. The *Sindie*'s absurd deer-stalker and bow-tie wearing editorial manager Colin Harrow — a Montgomery man through and through — took a different view. When he saw that the extra staff would temporarily increase the paper's editorial budget by £600 a week, he cancelled *all* casual payments without reference to Boycott, with the result that no freelances got paid at all in the week of the great relaunch.

After senior staff threatened to resign unless the hacks were paid, Harrow relented — on condition that the story did not leak to the *UK Press Gazette*. Rather carelessly, however, he neglected to extend the ban to *Private Eye*.

IN A most interesting article for *Harpers & Queen*, Ann Barr reports that many people who have been working at home find that they are lonely.

"Humans seem to need bustle," she observes. "We are not so much herd animals as hive insects. We love being part of a hive at least part of the time." She cites the case of Stephen Gaymer, a writer and publisher, who found that he "missed the buzz" of office life when he moved to Oxfordshire.

In an equally interesting article for the *Times*, Giles Coren (son of Alan) reports that many people who work from home find that they are lonely. "Human beings like to bustle," he observes, with startling originality. "We may be social animals, but as workers we are bees. And our instinct is to hive." He cites the case of Stephen Gaymer, a writer and publisher, who found that he "missed the buzz" of office life when he moved to Oxfordshire.

Ann Barr's pioneering piece appeared in the January issue of *H&Q*, on sale from mid-December. Coren's feature was published in the *Times* on 14 January. Are they, by any chance, related?

NONSTOP AGONY

AT Marje Proops's memorial service at St Bride's, Fleet Street, the patron saint of agony aunts got a rousing send off.

The jollity was helped along by dashing Piers "Boy" Morgan, editor of Marje's old paper, and various other *Mirror* bigwigs who had promised to but the drinks at El Vino's.

But big-hearted Piers, alas, had to race back to the office after the service with his senior execs leaving only his unwitting political editor, David "Scab" Seymour, to place his credit card on the bar. By the time Marje's army of tearful mourners had assuaged their grief, Seymour's card had been billed for £2,000!

ANNE "Thought for the Day" Atkins, the *Daily Telegraph*'s new agony aunt, herself needs help after leading her column on 24 January with a letter from a woman whose husband "Alex", a banker, was apparently having an affair with his woman boss.

The original letter sent to the *Torygraph* was signed "Penny Masterly", and concluded that "all my friends are acting as if they believe it to be true... it's as if someone published it in the *Telegraph*".

Even with this massive hint Atkins — and her page's dunderhead sub-editors — did not catch on. They simply removed the *Telegraph* reference and changed the woman's initials to M.P. No one seemed to spot that "Alex" is from the paper's long-running cartoon strip about a yuppie banker who has an affair with his woman boss behind his wife's back — she being Penny Masterly.

Readers of the column should prepare for more fiction — to judge by a memo from deputy features editor Eleanor Mills. Before going on holiday, Mills wrote to her stand-in of "Atkins" as follows:

"As you know, the woman is neurotic... Anne is pretty good at selecting a good mix of letters. From last week we had to chop one, so she's already got one about a child wanting to be a writer and some sex ones. What she'll need is some etiquettey stuff. If none comes through in letters, start feeling creative but don't tell her you're making it up!"

Not that Atkins would probably notice. And as the memo concluded: "She should file her copy on Thursday am. Call her first thing on Monday to get her gingered up — ha ha ha, I don't envy you this one!"

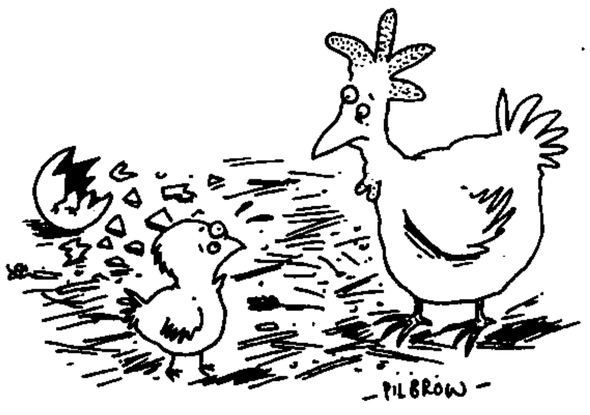
THE *Sunday Mirror*'s brilliant new agony aunt, Eve Pollard, has been dispensing more agony — this time to listeners of Radio 4's holiday programme *Breakaway*. So much so that for the first time in the show's history listeners rang in to protest about the arrogance of its presenter.

Many pointed out that among the holiday venues they most aspire to is the Caribbean island of Barbados, but the closest they are ever likely to get to it is flipping through a travel brochure. However, when the pompous Bollard heard that Mandy "Eight Babies" Allwood and one of the Spice Girls had been there, she commented dismissively: "Poor Barbados." And when she was told it was no longer the in-spot, she couldn't resist adding: "I'm glad I didn't go this year — obviously I was ahead of the pack."

What La Bollard forgot to mention was that she and hubby Sir Nick Lloyd used to spend every Christmas in Barbados — but that was in the days when they both edited national newspapers and had unlimited access to cheapies and freebies. Now that neither of them enjoys this exalted office, the invitations seem to have dried up — and, with it, their love affair with Barbados.

Instead, Eve has taken herself off for a well-earned break at her house in France. Asked by the luckless *Mirror* sub-editor responsible for rewriting her page how she would provide her copy while on holiday, she replied: "I'll fax it from there." But, the naive sub inquired, won't you want the latest letters sent out to you? To which milady smiled enigmatically and said: "I keep the best ones in my head."

What can she mean?



"I come from a broken home"

STREET OF McSHAME

LET there be no doubt: the *Sun* stands four-square behind the Act of Union. In a ferocious attack on Tory MP Hugh Dykes, published on 6 January, it demanded: "Why is he so pally with Labour and the Liberal Democrats? He seems to have forgotten that true Conservatives stand for preserving the United Kingdom, not tearing it apart by giving Scotland its own Parliament."

What the dullards of Wapping seem to have forgotten is that the *Sun* also advocates tearing Britain apart. Five years ago, under the huge headline "Rise Now and Be a Nation Again", the paper's Scottish edition carried a front-page editorial explaining "why Scotland must have independence".

Is it having second thoughts, perhaps? Not at all. The Scottish *Sun* regularly carries columns by ScotNat leader Alex Salmond and former SNP MP Jim Sillars. As recently as 23 January it ran a full-page editorial restating its position: "We have *come to the inescapable* conclusion that Scotland's destiny lies as an independent nation." Strangely, this nationalist polemic was omitted from London editions — which instead carried an editorial rejoicing over the new royal yacht ("Ship Hooray for Britannia").

North of the border, the *Sun* is rather less enamoured of the royal family. When the Prince of Wales visited Edinburgh last month, a sneering report in the Scottish *Sun* was headlined "WE DON'T WANT YOU HEIR, CHAS. No Warm Welcome For Royal Visitor." In English editions, by contrast, there was a brief editorial praising the prince for trying to restore the monarchy's reputation in Scotland.

During the general election, the English *Sun* will be arguing vigorously against Scottish devolution or *independence*, while its Caledonian alter-ego will campaign equally passionately for them. Whatever the result, the paper will be able to claim, once again, that "It Was The *Sun* Wot Won It".

HOW THEY ARE RELATED

WHEN Sir Jams Goldsmith launched his Riff-Raff Party last April, he granted an exclusive interview to *Daily Telegraph* hack Robert Shrimsley — who duly wrote a long and sympathetic piece, without mentioning that his late father, Anthony "Toady" Shrimsley, had been employed by Goldfinger.

Now Sir Jammy has printed 25 million copies of a Referendum newspaper, to be delivered to every household in the land. And which lucky hack got the job of editing this absurd piece of vanity publishing? Step forward Bernard "Slimy" Shrimsley — Robert's uncle.

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

"THE Government does take drugs, very seriously."

— Ian Lang, trade secretary, speaking on BBC *Question Time*, 30 January 1997.

HALLO! THE HEARTWARMING COLUMN

HALLO! "NEW" Labour has promised its first post-election peerage to a very deserving cause, I hear. Guess who will be joining yours truly in the Lords? None other than the delightful hatchet-faced David Montgomery. But which side of the House will he sit on? David is the Tory-inclined chief executive of the Labour-supporting *Mirror*! While Lord Rommel of Share Options has a splendidly feudal air, unkind critics are already suggesting such a promise could only possibly have been made if Tony Blair really did intend to abolish the House of Lords!

HALLO! OH DEAR! Not for the first time, my chum Darius Guppy's insatiable greed has got the better of him.

As part of the publicity campaign organised by publisher John Blake to promote Guppy's charmingly self-serving memoir *Roll The Dice*, the Etonian jailbird was due to go on the Richard and Judy show. Two days before transmission, however, he rang the producer and asked what the fee was.

"Er, there isn't one," he was told. "You're promoting your book, after all." Although Guppy seemed satisfied, the producer rang again on the eve of the broadcast to make sure his ex-con guest was definitely going to turn up. "Oh yes," Guppy reassured him. "For £2,000." The interview was promptly cancelled.

HALLO! *COMMONERS continue to attack our aristocracy, latest victim being Princess Anne's strapping six foot chum, Lord Rowallan, so cruelly persecuted in the national press for the small matter of decking his petite ex-wife Sandrew, 35, a former stable lass, in front of other Scottish gentry at a showjumping event.*

Happily Rowallan was not condemned in all quarters: the peer's local Kilmarnock Times remains a big fan. As Milord told the sympathetic rag — which referred only to "a very minor court case" — "I now understand how the royal family must feel. When the press get their claws into you, they rip you apart."

How right he is. And how tiresome it must be when, as a thrice married Old Etonian who sits in the Other Place lording it over the unwashed masses, the press reports it when you are found guilty of assaulting someone smaller than yourself. Not only that, but the papers then dig up irrelevant details about your suitability for public life — like the fact that you were recently taken to court for not paying for the food and drink at your latest wedding. What a cheek!

HALLO! WHEN the *Evening Standard*'s Londoner's Diary broke the heartwarming story of Mark Phillips' secret marriage to horsey heiress Sandy Pflueger, the Marquesa hears that a splendid photograph was lined up to illustrate the piece. It showed the manly Captain Phillips enjoying traditional English fieldsports.

But the picture failed to appear. Why on earth, muses the Marquesa, should a photograph of Captain Phillips holding a shotgun *not* be used to illustrate the delightful news of his wedding? The usual 500 pesetas is offered to any bright reader who can solve this bizarre conundrum!

HALLO! RENAISSANCE man Terence Conran, so busy the odd fact occasionally slips his memory, boasts of his masterpiece at Gatwick's North Terminal: the magnificent steel cones washed by cascades of water. In the *Independent on Sunday* recently, puffing his book *Terence Conran on Design*, the great man referred to his role in designing the cones. His firm had the interior design contract for the new terminal and Terence mentioned the cones as "our idea".

This came as an unwelcome surprise to the internationally acclaimed sculptor William Pye who conceived, designed and executed the splendid cones under a separate contract with the British Airports Authority.

Call the cones hotline!

HALLO! *HELENA Bonham-Carter was enormously flattered to be invited to a top-flight "policy" meeting with Labour's shadow chancellor Gordon Brown and the ever-lovely Peter Mandelson — to discuss, along with someone called Merchant Ivory, Labour's future "film" policy. Helena spoke passionately about artistic creativity, public funding and the national interest.*

Which was all jolly interesting, except that the convenor of this gathering, Labour's millionaire MP Geoffrey Robinson, had simply wanted the chance to meet a film star.

HALLO! SCANDALOUSLY, an obscure publication called *Total Film* is shockingly unfamiliar with the lofty social status of "British actress Anouska Hempel", better known as Lady Weinberg.

Sleazy American director Russ "Tits" Meyer, reviewing his unsavoury *oeuvre*, quite unnecessarily recalls the early career of this fine woman, now married to the chairman of Allied Dunbar, Sir Mark Weinberg. Fortunately guests who pay fortunes to stay at Anouska's swanky Bayswater hotel, The Hempel, are unlikely to read Meyer's analysis of his 1973 movie, *Blacksnake*.

"Anouska Hempel had small tits," sighs Meyer. "She was in this rape scene with Percy Herbert and Dave Prowse, and when we got back to the states, the US distributors said there wasn't enough nudity in the movie. But I couldn't find a body double in LA with breasts small enough. In the end, we did find this girl with tiny tits and shot some cut-ins with her."

La Hempel wasn't amused. "When she saw her tits along with the American tits," sniggers Meyer, "she freaked out! I'm not her favourite person."

Even less so, I fear, when the video of Anouska's sensitive 1973 performance is re-released again this summer!

HALLO! *THE MARQUESA, alas, has been forced many times to remind readers of the unpleasant side of the warden of St George's, Windsor, Professor Richard Whitfield (Eyes passim), revealed by internal reports as a bully who "likes to pick on one individual, mostly women."*

On 11 January, under the "Credo" banner in the Times, Whitfield counter-attacked, denouncing, "character assassination with malicious intent, sometimes sugared with thinly veiled public humour." This, he explained, was the way of the "anti-Christ" to undermine "some uncomfortable truth".

Goodness, one hadn't realized this was a cosmic battle of Good versus Evil!

'The Marquesa'

IN THE TEAROOM

THE Tories' pre-election barrage has largely dropped short, leaving Labour unscathed and ministers complaining that they're dangerously close to becoming victims of friendly fire.

Indeed, Michael Portillo is so shaken by a series of "blue on blue" incidents, he's beginning to think someone is gunning for him.

First there was the wheeze to wrong-foot Blair over the royal yacht. This was dreamt up in the prime minister's office, and Portillo was assured that the big guns would come out in support. When it backfired, the defence secretary was left alone to take the flak for dragging the queen into politics. Precisely the kind of reactionary old boobies on the backbenches whom Portillo has been working so hard to court are now calling him a pushy little oik and questioning his political judgement.

Then there was the spectacularly ill-timed decision to withdraw the army canteens contract from the NAAFI and give it to Booker, leaving hundreds redundant in a Tory seat. This was pushed past the defence secretary on the sly — Portillo's friends claim to see the hidden hand of Hezza — but it's clear who is going to look the bungling incompetent.

If this is all a clever plot to damage Portillo's chances of becoming Tory leader by blaming the coming fiasco in the polls on him, it too is in danger of backfiring. The defence secretary is letting it be known he is not afraid to name the guilty men.

'Urquhart'

A FORTNIGHT on from Gordon Brown's public disavowal of any intention to "tax and spend", many of his shadow cabinet colleagues are still sidling up to any who will listen, bemoaning the fact that "Big" Gordon hadn't bothered to let many of them into his equally big secret.

What really rankles is the fact that Brown seemingly had more faith in the counsel of his spin doctor Charlie Whelan and his economics adviser Ed Balls than in members of the government-in-waiting. He told this pair of his planned tax and spending bombshell, after all, during an evening meal which was also attended by his paramour, PR Girl Friday Sarah Macauley.

Whelan meanwhile has been busy in the Commons press gallery assuring credulous hacks that there had never been any difference between Blair and Brown on the top rate of tax, which is set to remain as Nigel Lawson left it in his 1987 budget — a budget Brown described at the time as being "motivated by greed dressed up as ideology to reward those who already had a great deal by taking millions from those in desperate need".

In fact Brown had wanted to increase the top rate to 50p in the pound but was thwarted by the joint efforts of the "dear leader" and his Svengali, Mandy Mandelson, who got cronies in the lobby to ambush Brown by publishing a series of leaks preparing the ground for the ditching of one of the last major planks of Labour policy. Blair let it be known that tax increases, even on the super rich, would affect the votes of the aspirational middle classes, who will instead soon have to face cuts in mortgage tax relief and a galaxy of tax increases on perks if Labour is elected and Brown is forced to address an expected deficit.

"Which country offers most kudos to the pound?"

THE Hillsborough Family Support Group has written to all MPs asking for support in its efforts to quash the coroners' "misadventure" verdict following the deaths of 90 football fans in 1989 — and for a new criminal investigation into the cover-up of video evidence exposed in the recent ITV documentary on the disaster.

About 120 replies have so far been received — almost all of them friendly and cooperative. There are two exceptions. Sebastian Coe (Tory, Falmouth) to whom the support group wrote a special plea "as a sportsman" wrote back: "I am guided by a strict parliamentary convention which dictates I may only represent my constituents and as none of the victims of this tragedy were from my constituency, I am not in a position to respond to you in any detail."

Joe Ashton (Labour, Bassetlaw) was even less helpful. "Unfortunately," he wrote, "as a director of Sheffield Wednesday Football Club I am afraid that, following legal advice at a high level, I am unable to become involved in your campaign or in the controversy following the televising of the programme."

IN a moving speech to the Tory backbench MPs' constitutional affairs committee on 17 January, John Redwood MP attacked the power of quangos and called for many of them to be replaced.

Can this be the same John Redwood who, as secretary of state for Wales, appointed Mr David Rowe-Beddoe as chairman of the Welsh Development Agency and then, not much later, appointed him chairman of another quango, the Development Board for Rural Wales, thus doubling the lucky chairman's salary?

Could this be the same John Redwood who as Welsh secretary said on television he had "no idea" that Rowe-Beddoe was a diehard Tory and a former chairman of Conservatives Abroad in Monte Carlo until an impertinent television interviewer pointed out that the Monte Carlo job was on Rowe-Beddoe's application form? Or the same John Redwood who, as secretary of state, gave permission to Rowe-Beddoe to join the board of Development Securities, a property developer with huge interests in Wales? Er, yes.

PS: The chairman of Development Securities is another former Tory minister, the Earl of Gowrie, who made an incisive speech in the House of Lords on 22 January when he sought "to call attention to the case for City firms establishing systems of corporate governance which can maintain confidence throughout the world". The noble earl ranged over many areas of corporate governance without once mentioning Development Securities, its colourful founder Martin Landau, or the appointment of its director from a controversial quango.

FORMER heritage secretary David Mellor phoned *Mirror* editor Piers "Gormless" Morgan last week in a terrific rage. Why, he asked, had the *Mirror* attacked him on two consecutive days?

The first slur was the revelation that Mellor "who quit after an affair collected £8,048" as a government golden handshake. Even more hurtful was the following day's attack on the sports pages headlined "You foul S-Mellor". The *Mirror*'s chief sports writer Nigel Clarke criticised Mellor's role as presenter of Radio Five Live's 606 phone-in football programme.

Clarke wrote: "Mellor has no real knowledge of the game, other than that of a punter with a radio show." He ended, damningly: "Clearly it takes more than the odd performance in a Chelsea shirt to qualify as a soccer expert."

Mellor's complaints fell on sympathetic ears. Morgan placated the former minister and immediately made him an offer he couldn't refuse. Four days after Clarke's attack, it was announced on the *Mirror*'s sports page which screamed: "Mellor in the *Mirror*. He's brash, opinionated and tells it like it is. And he's in the *Mirror* every Tuesday!"

IF Cherie Booth ever has a Hillary Clinton-style influence over her husband's healthcare policies, NHS staff had better not expect too much from an incoming Labour government.

For it was Tony Blair's barrister wife who spiritedly — though unsuccessfully — represented the United Leeds Hospitals NHS Trust in trying to make popular surgeon Anthony Owen redundant from Wharfedale General. A 3,000-name petition supporting him has prompted health secretary Stephen Dorrell to order his reinstatement — despite the QC's pleas that he should remain sacked.

Perhaps Ms Booth will be more successful bending the ear of a Labour secretary of state for health?

BRITISH Telecom bosses in Scotland had a new year's message of a different kind for their workers: they asked them to work extra hours for free.

The incredibly obese fat cat company outlined its plans in a memo to managers from the head of marketing, Tricia Hynes, under the heading "BT Ambassadors — Scotland trial". The 10,000 Scottish workers are being asked to promote and sell BT products on a voluntary basis "to give all BT people the opportunity to help promote the company in this increasingly competitive marketplace".

Staff will collect "points" and if they do well might even be awarded a special badge. As the memo points out: "You will get a lot of personal benefit and BT will be paying all your personal costs to take part — so isn't it reasonable that you give something personally too?"

BT insiders predict the answer will be a resounding *no*.

MINISTERS continue to insist that Chris Woodhead, the man in charge of raising educational standards, enjoys enormous popular support. But it seems his own colleagues are not quite so confident.

On Tuesday this week Woodhead was due to take part in a debate at the Institute of Education, opposing the motion that "the current approach to inspection, league tables and testing is detrimental to the raising of educational standards". The proposer was Professor Ted Wragg of Exeter University, one of the government's most forceful critics.

Two weeks before the debate, all Woodhead's staff at Ofsted and every HM inspector in the country received an urgent memo from Jonathan Lawson, Ofsted's PR supremo. "Chris will be facing a hostile audience of up to 800 teachers, teacher trainers and others for whom Ted Wragg is a hero," he wailed. "He could do with a few cheerleaders from Ofsted to support him."

Alas, it seems many of Woodhead's potential cheerleaders don't think much of him either: many of them promptly leaked the memo to the *Eye*.

'Backbiter'

AIRPORT NEWS

AS Manchester prepares for a Swampy and Animal-style direct action campaign against a new runway at the city's airport, it's worth recalling that local media, in particular the *Manchester Evening News*, have put a news blackout on stories hostile to the airport. And there are plenty.

No one, for example, has yet reported that the bus station recently built into the terminal one extension couldn't accommodate the buses that wanted to use it. This was discovered when the buses tried to drive in.

Then there were the two double-end buses, bought for £500,000, which couldn't negotiate the roadway under terminal two and so have to cruise round the airport completely empty save for a few lazy staff cadging lifts. The buses were meant to double carrying capacity but they hold the same number of bodies as before.

Or how about the new state-of-the-art baggage scanning equipment? Why, it is so advanced it can't cope with big suitcases.

Strangely, none of these stories has been reported locally.

NOOKS and CORNERS

DON'T say I didn't tell you so, because I have been banging on about the new barbarians in our midst for decades. I mean the gang of High Tech superstars — Richard, Norm, Nick and Co — who began in the 1960s with a vision of buildings made of Meccano and the notion that architecture was just a matter of nuts and bolts, wires and gaskets.

They said, of course, that they were inspired by the Crystal Palace and the great works of Victorian engineering: well, they would say that, wouldn't they? And now they have a chance to show how much *they really care about such things as they* attain new and dizzy heights.

Well, we shall see, as several of our High Tech superstars have got their hands on magnificent examples of the Victorian engineering structures they affect to admire — railway termini. It is one of the miracles of modern Britain that we still have many of the best 19th century railway structures surviving — and not because they are "heritage" but because they remain useful, and work. Now they are now threatened by the grasping venality of their new owner, Railtrack, and by the vanity of our internationally-acclaimed architects.

Norman Foster has his hands on St Pancras, and, thanks to the feebleness of English Heritage and the inanity of parliament (*Eye* 912), he can do virtually what he likes with it to turn it into an international terminal. And Nicholas Grimshaw — he of the British pavilion at the Sevile Expo and the Waterloo Channel tunnel train shed — has Paddington to play around with. He wants to demolish a great chunk of it.

Be thankful for small mercies. In his "master plan", Grimshaw is content to leave Brunel's three original and most beautiful train sheds alone; what he wants down is the fourth shed so tactfully added by the Great Western Railway in 1913-15. The ostensible reason for this is to accommodate the trains for the long-overdue Heathrow express link, and Railtrack insists that the proposed changes are "operationally led": "Our priority is to improve traffic access to and from the station and rationalise the platforms and concourse lay-outs."

So what is Span 4 — a 109-foot-wide structure enclosing a space capable of infinite modification — going to be replaced by? Why, an office block on top of a "transport interchange". In other words, what Grimshaw is proposing is a commercial development, not really a railway station at all. In fact, his scheme is not in the tradition of Victorian engineering but in that more recent tradition of squeezing trains under office developments, of which the most notorious was the "air rights" replacement of Penn Central in New York. In Britain we have Embankment Place over Charing Cross by Grimshaw's old (and better?) half, Terry Farrell, which is certainly a cut above John Poulson's block at Cannon Street. And now a Grimshaw block to enhance Paddington — and to enhance Railtrack's shareholders.

You have been warned.

BUT "heritage", of course, can be as bad, if not worse: witness the myopic barbarism endemic on the Isle of Man — wrecking Douglas with buildings of astonishing mediocrity, or replacing real structures by new bogus ones on the Manx Electric Railway — one of the island's great assets.

Now the Manx heritage department — a government quango — has built a heritage centre in Peel. Nothing wrong with that, I suppose, except that the new buildings are in the conservation-friendly, planning-officer-approved Victorian warehouse style and have little to do with the charming old town with its ancient ruined castle. Worse, these bogus buildings overshadow the old and genuine terminus of the now closed narrow gauge line of the Isle of Man Railway. Worse still, building this gratuitous heritage centre on the site of the old station greatly impedes the dream of one day reopening the railway line from Douglas.

Well done, Manx Heritage.

'Piloti'

Two curious letters

22 January 1997

Sir,

Re: 53-55 Newington Green, Islington. Your 24 January issue included a characteristically robust piece by Piloti on the three grade I listed houses in Newington Green. Unfortunately Piloti was misled by those who briefed him. Let me set the record straight.

English Heritage did indeed carry out comprehensive structural repairs to these houses, then offered them for sale in the summer of 1994. The new owners, and there is nothing mysterious at all about their identity, completed the purchase in the autumn and then employed a local architect to obtain listed building consent to complete their rehabilitation. Listed building consent was granted in June 1995 and the contract drawings were prepared for a start in spring 1996. Unfortunately the selected contractor failed to fulfil his obligations and was dismissed. The tendering process then had to be repeated. A new contractor was appointed in November 1996. Work began on two of the houses immediately after Christmas and the third will follow on in May of this year.

It is simply incorrect to say that nothing has happened for two years. We understand the disappointment felt by the "group of enthusiasts" that they were not successful in their bid to buy the houses. Indeed we have written to them on four separate occasions explaining the position. Given that the builders have been on site for all to see for three weeks now, it is a pity that Piloti did not check his facts with us first before misleading your readers.

Yours faithfully,
PAUL DRURY,
Director, English Heritage, London and the South East Region.

29 January 1997

Sir,

As a local resident I was delighted to read Piloti telling us the truth about the houses at 53 to 55 Newington Green. Their perpetual state of disrepair is proverbial locally and it is high time something was done about them. I pass by the houses daily and while occasionally I have noticed brief periods of activity it is clear no real work has begun. I cannot understand why English Heritage has allowed them to remain derelict for so many years if there were people willing to restore them all along. Or why English Heritage did not finish off the job properly when they began restoring the houses four years ago. It is clear the present owner of these disgraceful wrecks can't or won't cope with them and the houses are still empty and rotting.

Yours sincerely,
J. FOBERT,
Architect, London N5.

Pseuds Corner

For instance, my piece P* Font; as soon as he saw it, I knew he liked it. It's a multicoloured ceramic cushion, around which are blue forms, which appear to represent testicles and floppy penises. Separating each of these, which are the 12 apostles, are deep red florets, which could, in my oversexed mind, appear to be clitoral.**

NICHOLAS POPE
Sunday Times Magazine

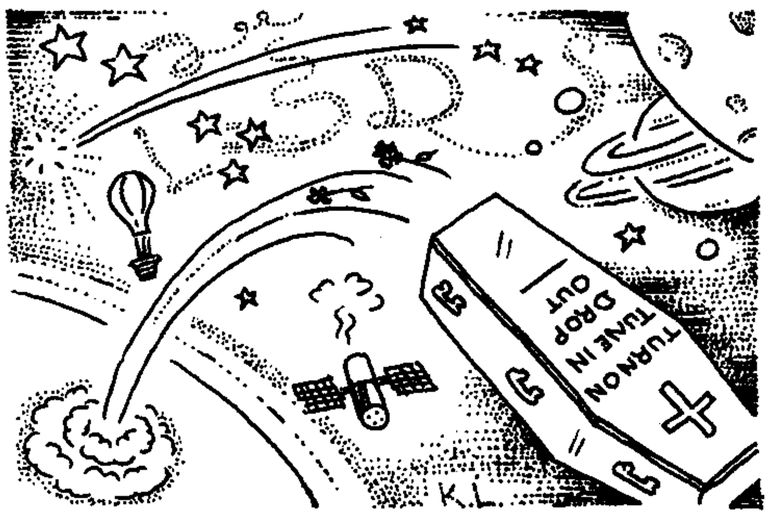
Our hearts soared on your wings and all was well with the world.

EMMA THOMPSON
(Poster advertising Cirque du Soleil)

Play is what I value most about lovemaking now. Sex is the ultimate playtime — not sport. Sport is competition. Sex is not a sport. My lover is the best playmate in the world. His work keeps him away from home a lot — but because he is a foreign correspondent and I'm a novelist, we share a certain power to describe our worlds. We use description of the world at large, the world that often separates us, to fuel the erotic.

As he was leaving on assignment last year, for example, I slipped a seashell from my collection, a Cornish limpet to be specific, into his coat pocket. When I knew he was in the taxi on his way to Heathrow, I rang him on his mobile. "Without looking at it," I said, "reach into your pocket and tell me what I put in there." "Oh God," came the answer, "it's your nipple."

MARIANNE WIGGINS
Aspects of Love (Times)



Timothy Leary was a pioneer in examining the development of human potential. As his last expression of how the human spirit can soar and evolve, part of his remains are soon to be launched into outer space.

Putnam Publisher's Catalogue

Marcadia Postponed: Marketing, Utopia and the Millennium
Before envisioning the future of marketing, as the conference theme suggests, it may be worthwhile examining our desire to envision the future of marketing. This paper argues that our need to imagine the future is part of an innate utopian propensity. It examines the relationship between marketing and utopianism, contends that marketing is inherently utopian in ethos, and concludes that, necessary though they are, future visions of marketing cannot and should not be enacted.

STEPHEN BROWN, PAULINE MACLAREN and LORNA STEVENS
Journal of Marketing Management

Henry V and The Nature of Inner Royalty
An experiential weekend of Mytho-Drama with Richard Olivier

Mytho-drama is a fusion of creative and psychological techniques that treats great drama as the template of the psyche. We use Shakespear's Henry V to explore the initiatory trials and manor woman must undergo in the quests and rites of passage to achieve a sense of purpose and fulfil their destiny. We focus on the journey towards Soul that is an essential requirement of true leadership. Richard is a theatre director, workshop leader and author. He is also the son of the late Laurence Olivier. This workshop is open to men and women and no acting experience is necessary! You will be asked to read the play in advance and choose a speech that speaks to you most.

Flint House Natural Health Clinic and Learning Centre

CONTRIBUTORS: Lindsay Beresford, Janice Jones, L. Simkin, Everyone, Kitty Guthrie, Gnome.

£10 paid for entries

EYE TV

Last Chance Lottery
Secret Lives
Fortean TV
Brass Eye
(All Channel 4)

FOR years to come, the Mulders and Scullys among the media correspondents will speculate about the secret real reason that Michael Grade suddenly paid serious money to buy himself out of a five-year contract on which the ink was still nearly wet. His shock resignation makes him the Harold Wilson of British TV.

Conspiracy theorists speculate that Blair and Brown have let Grade know that Channel 4 will definitely be privatised if they win the election. It's more likely, though, that Grade — a mentally youthful 50-year-old who has consciously tried to be a non-Birtist kind of democratic manager — was hurt and disturbed to find himself in an executive minority of one over his decision last November to pull the Chris Morris series *Brass Eye* from the schedule. Mocked and criticised by his own staff for the first time in his life, TV's Mr Nice Guy felt it was time to get out of TV.

If so, he is also getting out just before the second part of Grade's legend — his ability as a scheduler and commissioner — was about to fall apart. In the last year Channel 4 has managed only two homegrown hits — *Father Ted* and *TFI Friday* — amid a string of so-sos and no-nos.

Last week, for example, saw four big new year launches. And what did you get? **Last Chance Lottery**, a new Saturday night game show, was a tacky piece of opportunism which plays a series of silly games around the lottery numbers announced previously that night on BBC1. It is hosted by a grinning broth of a comic, Patrick Keilty, who has already fronted a disastrously unfunny show for the BBC. How alternative is this?

Secret Lives took on the subject of Princess Margaret and confirmed that this series has become a televisual *National Inquirer*, making tendentious claims of revelations about the famous. Yvonne's circle, being of the old fashioned kind, had closed tightly around her, so that the film's two central witnesses were a batty old bird who keeps a nearby villa on Mustique and one old chum of Roddy's. A not-very-lookalike actress had been filmed in longshot sipping whisky in a chair to try to cover for the shortage of footage of the subject.

Fortean TV is a disgracefully credulous strange-but-true show, hosted by Father Lionel Fanthorpe, a Church of Wales priest in dog collar and leather biking jacket. Aimed at the kind of saddos who believe that *The X-Files* and *Dark Skies* are secret history lessons, the series trawls through weeping statues, mermaids, miracles. Remarkably, the "nun-bun" (an American sweet roll that allegedly looks like Mother Teresa) and the "holy aubergines" (vegetables supposedly holding Koranic verses) were not played for laughs.

Sir Nicholas Scott's Ivanhoe

And then there's **Brass Eye**. Morris's two big jokes — newsreaders speaking bollocks in a tone of great authority and B-list celebrities spoofed into looking stupid — were both expensively and cleverly accomplished. But the exclusion of the stunts involving politicians, which first gave Grade cold feet, left Morris, a would-be satirical guerilla, with a show not far away from Noel Edmonds' Gotchas.

It is hard to see how any of these programmes obviously fit Channel 4's original remit to produce programmes which no other channel would provide. *Last Chance Lottery* could easily have been on ITV. It's true that BBC2 would not have dared even commission a knocking documentary about the queen's sister, but it's also the case that a BBC executive — informed that a planned film had been denied access to all important witnesses and revealing archive — would have killed the project. *Fortean TV* only fulfils the remit if you think that the unrepresented minorities the fathers of the fourth channel had in mind included paranoid net-heads. When you add in such disasters as *The Gaby Roslin Show* and the large part of the drama budget spent on Dennis Potter's *Cold Lazarus*, the Channel 4 schedule looks rather trembly. For a year now, the station has been surviving on residual goodwill, plus *Friends*, *Father Ted*, *Film On Four* and, God help them, *Chris Evans*.

The Potter and Roslin disasters can be fairly blamed on Grade, who has always had a weakness for stars. But, finally, the man with the title of director of programmes is going to have to take some responsibility for the programming. Step forward John Willis, the main internal candidate hoping for promotion.

At this stage in its development, Channel 4 needs someone who can refresh the schedules and who isn't going to lower the channel's public profile too much after the high-wattage Grade. This identikit matches the BBC's Alan Yentob, who, despite the "ditherer" and "starfucker" criticisms, is an accomplished media schmoozer and a man with a recent record of revamping and reviving both BBC1 and BBC2. The pathetic irony is that — if Botney goes — Birt probably won't even bother to fill the supposed great new post of director of programmes, which was the cause of Yentob's disillusionment in a corporate reshuffle last summer which looks increasingly idiotic. Birt would just have to hope that Botney at 4 would not do too much people and programme shopping at the Wood Lane arcade.

'Square Eyes'

MEDIA NEWS

THE sudden announcement by Michael Grade that he was standing down as chief executive of Channel Four produced a vintage show of humbug from the *Sun*.

Hacks faced a ticklish problem: while it might by politically expedient to have a go at "Mr Mucky" in defence of family values, there was no getting away from the fact that the Dirty Digger (prop: the *Sun*) is the biggest pornographer of them all.

On the *Sun* newsdesk, the top of page two and a leader space were cleared to deal with Grade's departure. Under the headline "Mr Porn Quits as Boss of Channel Four: Good Riddance, Say MPs", the *Sun* ran a quote from Tory MP Tim Devlin: "There has been a very liberal attitude to sex and violence while Mr Grade has been at the helm," he observed helpfully.

This was enough to incense the *Sun*'s leader writer, who clearly expected telly bosses to be more responsible about such things: "Mr Mucky. ONE man took TV into the sewers... Decent people will not mourn his passing. Let's hope the airwaves smell a little sweeter."

Sadly the *Sun*'s leader writer was unable to speculate about the man who *really* knows how to make a mint out of sewage on the telly — and in newsprint, for that matter: er, Rupert Murdoch. A glance at the *Sun*'s TV guide reveals that in the week that Mr Mucky stepped down, SKY TV offered its wretched viewers *Indecent Behaviour II*, an "erotic thriller starring Sharon Tweed as a sex therapist" (25/1); *The Happy Hooker*, "late night erotic adult comedy-drama" (28/1); *Masseuse*, "Erotic late-night entertainment for adults only" (30/1); and *The Red Shoe Diaries: Auto Erotica* (29/1).

Henry Porter looks behind the digital revolution and declares Rupter Murdoch the undisputed winner

Independent on Sunday

THE row over the pay and perks of Michael Green, chairman of Carlton Communications — a modest £727,000 a year plus £1.2m worth of shares — has resulted in a much more controversial disclosure going unnoticed.

In 1992 Green donated £15,000 to the Conservative party just after Carlton secured one of the prized ITV franchises. Now a new biography by Raymond Snoddy reveals that the money was paid through Green's charity, the Tangent Charitable Trust.

What Snoddy failed to realise was that under charity law this was an illegal donation. "The law is clear that charities must not have political objects," states the Charity Commission. "A charity must not support a political party."

Since winning the franchise, Green has thrived, swallowing Central and Westward TV in his quest to be a media mogul. It will be interesting to see if he suddenly makes another one-off payment to the political party in office the next time the ITV franchises are awarded by the government.

RUBY WAX meets...
AN INTERVIEWER WHO ASKS VACUOUS, UNFUNNY QUESTIONS CAUSING COMPLETE EMBARRASSMENT
SOMEONE WHO'S OBSESSED WITH HIS OWN EGO...
AND TOTALLY UNINTERESTED IN ANYONE ELSE...
SO...
FRANK SKINNER
ARE YOU AFTER MY JOB?

THE new issue of Reuters' in-house magazine has a splendid defence of journalistic integrity by the news agency's editor-in-chief Mark Wood, who boasts of "a 150-year-old tradition, sometimes threatened but always upheld, for neutrality, objectivity and freedom from bias".

Oddly enough, this same Mark Wood was recently removed from the board of directors as part of a "restructuring" exercise. In an interview elsewhere in the magazine, Reuters' chief executive Peter Job is asked to explain the complete lack of editorial representation on the board — an odd omission in a company whose main business is, er, news-gathering.

"Editorial activities can quickly give rise to business emergencies," he warns. "I can remember a case where one of our Middle East managers was effectively removed from Bahrain because the authorities were upset over a relatively minor Reuters story about a territorial dispute between Bahrain and Qatar."

In short, he doesn't want any tiresome, truth-telling journalists impeding the company's quest for ever-larger profits — a message that hardly tallies with Mark Wood's noble editorial manifesto a few pages later. With no hint of irony, Job then adds: "We also have to guard against a conflict of interest between our business operations and our editorial operations."

He concludes with a fine demonstration of his omnipotence: "When I was working in Asia, people used to ask where the headquarters was and I used to answer: 'Where I am.' " Louis XIV would be proud of him.

"MULTIMEDIA Expansion" was the upbeat headline in the *Times* on 24 January, over a story revealing that Rupert Murdoch's infobahn company, News Multimedia, was "to concentrate on rapidly expanding on-line activities".

This came as a surprise to the staff of News Multimedia itself: 25 of whom had just been told that they were to be made redundant.

RED faces at Westcountry Television, which followed up a national survey on the supposed relationship between a shopper's personality and the contents of his or her shopping basket.

Hapless hack Sean Brickell and a cameraman were sent to the Truro branch of Tesco where Brickell approached a woman and daughter who had chocolate cakes and tinned soup in their trolley — an odd combination, according to the survey.

The younger woman disagreed with Brickell's suggestion that the chocolate cakes indicated that she was an extrovert, so the crass hack turned to the mother and asked if it was true, as the tinned soup suggested, that she was both boring in bed and spent a lot of time on her own.

"Yes, actually I will be spending more time on my own," the woman agreed. "You see my husband has just died and we are shopping for the funeral lunch." Brickell is still digging a large hole in which he will eventually bury himself when he has got over his embarrassment.

MORE on the "special" relationship developing between the BBC and British Airways.

Last Eye revealed that a PR handout from BBC Resources included an item from its managing director Rod Lynch headlined "No Easy Way To Change" — a title Lynch said he had drawn from the October issue of *BA News*, implying a parallel between the two companies' goals.

Lynch's fondness for BA and its corporate ideals may be linked to the time he spent as an executive with the airline between 1971-89. The connection continues via Mike MacDonald, who was brought in by Lynch from... British Airways to organise the BBC archives.

BBC Resources and BBC archives are both being heavily "downsized" and "outsourced" — inspired by director-general John Birt, who may well have been influenced by his chum, BA chief executive Bob Ayling. The next step must be to sell resources and archives: will the "World's Favourite Airline" make a bid?

HACKWATCH: BARBARA ELLEN

SHE cut her teeth on the *New Musical Express* before graduating to the *Mail on Sunday*. She fancies herself as a smart, sassy controversialist. She wears plenty of lipstick. Yup: Barbara Ellen must be the new Julie Burchill.

Or so Jocelyn "Miss" Targett probably thought when he hired her as a pundit for the *Observer*'s "Comment" page. But he overlooked one small point. Her predecessors — Conor Cruise O'Brien, Neal Ascherson and so forth — may have droned on a bit at times, but they did at least have some knowledge of the world beyond the Groucho Club. Ellen, by contrast, appears to know about nothing but herself. And so — following the pioneering example of her chum William Leith, the original New Solipsist — she observes the events of the day through her navel:

8 September: The Political Animal Lobby has donated £1 million to "new" Labour. Barbara is "something of an armchair activist" herself, what with being an anti-hunting vegetarian, but the animal rights folk disgust her: "It may sound shallow, but have you *seen* the people at those rallies?" Perhaps it sounds shallow because it is. But she won't be budged: "I'm sorry, but I cannot plan noble, selfless deeds alongside people with dirty fingernails..." So that's animal rights taken care of. Onward!

15 September: In a week when it has been reported that Prince Charles rejects organised religion, Barbara tackles the big one: "Does God exist?" She dislikes atheists, and finds agnostics "pathetic". So she's a believer? Well, sort of. "Every now and then, I will take out my faith and give it an airing — usually at a party, where I can be assured of an intrigued male reaction. I am not the only one who does this. The world is full of Original Sindys who use cod-Catholic angst as a flirting mechanism." At last we know why God gave his only begotten son: so that Barbara Ellen could pick up guys at parties.

22 September: Bienvenida Buck has published a book about her amorous exploits, but she can't expect any sisterly solidarity from Barbara. Mistresses are "dim-witted, easily duped children", and Bienvenida in particular is "ridiculous", "duplicitous" and "appalling".

29 September: Barbara is alarmed by the "tide of disapproval" against Paula Yates. OK, so Paula "has been wandering the corridors of showbiz in too-tight/too-young clothes too damn long now to merit anything like automatic respect". Nevertheless, anyone who criticises Yates is clearly a woman-hater. "Misogyny is misogyny is misogyny, and should be fought at all costs... Why was Ian Hislop [*Who he? Ed.*] slapped on the back, as opposed to socked in the mouth, when he made that infamous poisonous attack on Yates on *Have I Got News For You?*" But it isn't only men who are guilty: "I am amazed," Barbara admits, "at how much other women loathe her." So are they all misogynists, too? We are not told.

13 October: "At long last, the medical profession has admitted that hypochondriacs are sick — 'in the head', that is." Can you guess Barbara's personal angle on the story? Of course: "Over the years I have suffered from 'leukaemia', 'multiple sclerosis', 'renal failure' and — my personal best — 'rabies'... The really annoying thing is how society perceives people such as me to be forever carping about their health."

20 October: Women drivers are catching the road-rage bug. As ever, Barbara is at the centre of things: "I am not against violent women per se, probably because I am one. As males of my acquaintance can testify, when the wine flows, things tend to get a little slap-happy, as in, I run around slapping them, and they are far from happy. But, drunk or sober, I have never attacked another woman." What, not even Bienvenida Buck?

27 October: Self-obsession reaches new heights this week, as Barbara spends the entire column discussing her new picture byline. "Not having seen it, I can only pray it is as ludicrously flattering as the last one. Indeed, I am not too proud to admit I have been on tenterhooks all week..." Fascinating!

3 November: Barbara Ellen — she who would never attack another woman — has had enough of fat females. "As one of life's scrag-ends, I am becoming increasingly impatient with the incessant self-pitying whining of fatties. They seem to think that they own the copyright on self-loathing, but they should put themselves in my shoes for once. Or, come to the point, my bras — most of which look a damn sight better when I mistakenly put them on backwards." As they say in America: thanks for sharing that with us, Babs.

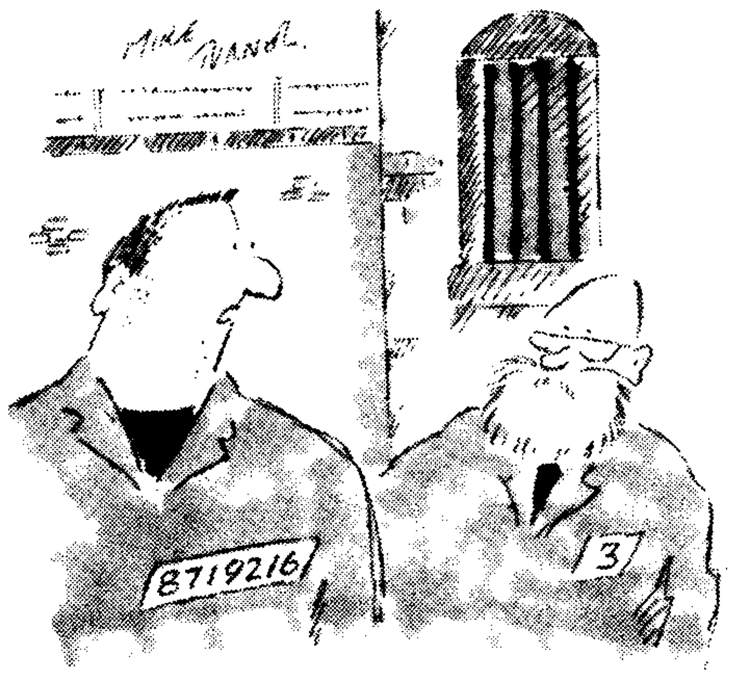
24 November: Barbara tries her hand at humour. "I see that *Tatler* has updated its 'little black book' of the nation's most eligible people. I also could not help but notice that, once again, I have not made the grade." Perhaps, she speculates, this is because "my social life consists mainly of sprawling on the sofa in my pyjamas, drinking mid-range plonk, keeping a beady eye out for 'nice men on the telly'. If someone particularly dishy turns up, I stand to attention and applaud..." Hilarious!

8 December: The new issue of *Woman's Journal* features a guide to cosmetic surgery. Barbara has nothing against face-lifts or eye-tucks, but she is shocked to learn that breast-enlargement is the most popular operation of all. "I talk as someone who is a prime candidate for this operation. At one stage, my bra size featured more As than a Ruth Lawrence report card... That said, I have never desired breasts so large that I can tie them in a bow and nothing can persuade me that 'augmentation' is a good idea. Quite apart from anything else, the whole thing has worryingly unfeministic undertones." Barbara seems to have forgotten that her great feminist heroine, Paula Yates, had just such an operation only a couple of years ago.

15 December: With Christmas approaching, Barbara's column is headed "I Can't Be Trusted to Behave at Parties." Cue 800 words of her very own hangover stories.

5 January: "What can one tell from an accent? Quite a lot, says the Institute of Personnel and Development..." And she's away. After a brief attack on "sad social climbers" who worry about such things, she returns to that perennially interesting topic — Ms B. Ellen. "It is quite possible to ditch an embarrassing accent. I know because I did so. Now I want it back again... I should have one of those cute, down-to-earth northern accents that vibrate with council-house credibility." Poor little diddums. As she confesses, "perhaps I'm just bitter".

26 January: Back from holiday, Barbara is startled to learn that soft-porn goddess Joanne Guest is to speak at the Oxford Union. For once, she decides to carry out some research before sounding off: she and a friend "catch some late-night porn on a cable channel". Does it inspire any profound, *Observer*ish thoughts about freedom of expression or the limits of liberalism? Er, no. Its only effect was to make her "desperate to see a penis, any penis, but preferably attached to a man". Still, it does yield this dazzling insight: "Porn is a masculine utopia built on wistful thinking, where foul men get to sleep with aerobicised goddesses." Why has no one noticed this before?



"Just how long have you been in, Pops?"

DOING THE ROUNDS

BIRMINGHAM's City hospital NHS trust recently appointed a specialist registrar in obstetrics and gynaecology from Pakistan, a certain Dr Shamin, whose husband, a trainee paediatrician, was also employed in Birmingham, at the Children's Hospital.

They arrived with three children, one of whom was 15 — suspiciously older than the children of most junior doctors. The midwives at **City hospital** were not over-impressed with Dr Shamin's clinical judgement, and often queried her decisions with senior colleagues. Then two weeks ago, she failed to appear for work.

Her oldest child had gone to the police claiming she was an orphan from a poor area of Pakistan and had been brought into the UK on a false passport to work as a domestic slave. She also alleged physical and sexual abuse. Police inquiries then uncovered that the husband has no medical qualifications at all. The family have since returned to Pakistan.

Many hospitals are so short of junior doctors they are desperate to appoint anyone. But surely individual trusts and the **General Medical Council** should, between them, be able to authenticate medical qualifications prior to appointment?

Bogus doctors in the NHS are not a rarity (100 have been exposed in the last 30 years), but the possibility that such a "doctor" was practising in Birmingham while allegedly guilty of kidnap, immigration offences and child abuse beggars belief.

Elsewhere in Birmingham, **Heartlands hospital** has been running perilously short of beds, with critically ill patients needing to be ventilated in the operating theatres overnight because intensive care is full. Elderly patients have been occupying many of the beds on the gynaecology and ante-natal wards, forcing some gynaecology patients to transfer to the ante-natal ward and then have to be ferried by ambulance to the operating theatre. There is also a threat that recognition of the hospital for the training of surgeons will be withdrawn, which would make the recruitment of junior surgeons extremely difficult.

Meanwhile, **Birmingham health authority** has told its trusts that it can't open any more intensive care beds because it can't find any specialist nurses. As a spokesman said: "We have ten ICU beds in the city for which we can't find staff." ICU beds are also in short supply at **London's Guy's hospital**, despite the completion two years ago of "Phase 3", a state-of-the-art annexe that was supposed to replace the existing intensive care unit. Alas, it has never opened.

● BOSSES at **Leeds General Infirmary** are worried that those who answer the telephone may reveal the true state of the NHS. So they have given secretaries and telephonists a special script to read to irate patients who want to know why their operations have been cancelled.

"There has been an increase in the number of emergency cases this year which has taken the health authorities by surprise and has put a strain on their finances. Consequently, they have asked us to defer any non-urgent cases until later in the year," says the memo, which adds helpfully: "Do *not* tell patients that purchasers have asked us to slow down the rate at which we reach patients — for obvious reasons."

● THE **Moir Medical Centre** in **Long Eaton, Nottinghamshire**, with 17,000 patients on its list, is one of the largest fundholding practices in the country. It also has debts of more than £100,000 which the health authority will have to pay from money which might otherwise have gone to the patients of non-fundholding GPs. However, in two months the practice will be expelled from the scheme for being "no longer able to manage its allotted sum efficiently".

● **Leicester's Arnold Lodge medium secure unit** has allowed 14 patients to abscond in the last 14 years. Security windows worth £200,000 were then installed, but patient Jamie Arnold still managed to jemmy them open... with a key.

● A RISE in admissions at the **Royal Halifax Infirmary** has forced the closure of a 24-bed surgical ward and the cancellation of routine operations. But Hadyn Cook, chief executive of **Calderdale NHS healthcare trust**, was in buoyant mood. "I urge people not to worry. Every hospital within a hundred miles is having similar difficulties."

● LAST October, **Kirkcaldy acute hospitals NHS trust** was awarded an additional capital allocation of £498,000 by the **Scottish office**, which it promptly committed to the completion and upgrade of the kitchen and catering services, and a children's ward scheme at **Victoria hospital**. Alas, in December the **NHS management executive** announced it would deduct the £498,000 from next year's capitol allocation, making these two legally committed building schemes untenable. The trust has already seen 82 redundancies in the last year, largely through Scottish office ineptitude. More look likely to follow.

M.D.

"Your husband's dead, but over a five-year average he's 3% alive in real terms"

DOWN ON THE FARM

ONE unexpected benefit of the European Union common agricultural policy (CAP) is that we can now import our food poisoning from France — tariff-free, of course. Such was the case in the recent salmonella outbreak attributed to Milumil baby milk.

The reason British babies drink milk produced in a French factory by a Dutch company is that CAP milk quotas restrict our own dairy farmers to supplying 85 percent of Britain's needs while allowing the EU as a whole to overproduce to the tune of 120 percent. Thus every other EU country has a milk surplus, which enables filthy foreigners to peddle their poison to us, instead of allowing us to peddle our own poison to ourselves.

With an internationally marketed product like Milumil, however, it is inconceivable it should have only affected British babies. It says something for the UK public health services that they detected the outbreak when not even France seems to have noticed it in her own back yard.

NEWS that Germany has attributed its recently reported case of BSE to "maternal transmission" has been greeted with incredulity. For this four-year-old animal to have been so affected, it is reasonable to expect its British parent would have died of BSE in the first place.

However, since its 13-year-old Belted Galloway mother is apparently alive and kicking, the diagnosis of maternal transmission seems to stem more from the determination of the Germans to conceal their own BSE problem than it does the application of anything that might be confused with science.

But if the Germans are reluctant to admit their problems, it may be because they are influenced by the continuing effects of the British government's *over*-reaction. The latest industry to be affected is the poultry sector, whence come alarming reports of chickens dying by the hundreds of thousands, and breeding birds laying unusually high numbers of eggs which are either sterile or fail to hatch.

The cause has been traced to the lack of animal protein in the chickens' diets, previously supplied by meal and bonemeal which was banned in March in the wake of BSE hysteria. It seems chickens are not responding well to an enforced "veggie" diet. Stand by for considerable price rises in chickenmeat and eggs.

STUNG by a rebuke that the media does not communicate properly with the scientific community, Charles Moore, editor of the *Daily Torygraph*, invited hacks and boffins to a star-spangled gathering at the Royal Society to discuss subjects of mutual interest.

How interesting, therefore, that Nobel Laureate Sir Aaron Klug, president of the society, chose not to devote his opening address to the wider range of scientific issues, as might have been expected. Instead, he spent much of his time lambasting the fawning hacks for being "emotive and unsound" in publicising Mark Purdey's theory on organophosphorus (OP) pesticides as a cause of BSE (*Eyes passim*).

Having cautioned hacks not to treat OPs as if they all behaved the same way, he then did the same by describing the effects of OPs as if they were all the same. He denied Purdey's thesis that any OPs could cause spongiform encephalopathies, the classic effect of BSE, even though there *is* scientific evidence that *some* specific types do precisely that.

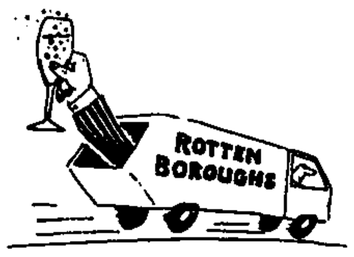
No doubt to avoid the possibility of dissident voices being heard, the two journalists who in Moore's own *Torygraph* had been most supportive of Purdey's thesis had not even been invited to the gathering. But then neither he nor Klug would have wished the hacks present to be acquainted with this awkward fact — not least because it might have upset the "generous sponsors" of this prestigious event: none other than the pharmaceutical giant, ICI, which developed some of the OPs concerned.

'New Muckspreader'

Old Macdonald

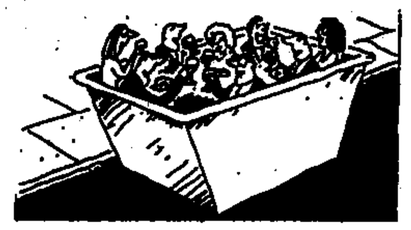
ALBERT

ONE OF THE LARGEST BATTLES OF ROMAN BRITAIN WAS FOUGHT ON THIS VERY SPOT GEORGE!
BATTLE OF WITHERING
ANCIENT SITE
THE TENTH, SIXTEENTH AND TWENTY FIRST LEGIONS WITH HELMET AND SHIELD LINED UP HERE .....
AN THE WATLING STREET OBJECTION SOCIETY TOOK THE HIGH GROUND!



THE
Rotten Borough Advertiser

Friday, 7 February 1997



CAUGHT NEWS

IN Hawick television news cameras caught Coun John Rudkin shouting abuse and spitting at a female horse rider during this year's Common Riding.

He has now been fined £500 by Jedburgh sheriff court for taking exception to a group of women riders who tried to hijack the traditionally male-only event.

Hackney Labour councillor Momodu Sillah, meanwhile, has also been in court. He was convicted at West London magistrates' court of failing to declare that he owed £617 council tax — before voting on where to spend the tax raised by those locals who had paid.

Sillah, who parted from the Labour party last year, was caught by police after a fellow councillor tipped them off that he had not paid his council tax. Even his defence lawyer described him to the court as someone who "does not come across as a savoury citizen".

LITTLE AND LARGESSE

DESPERATE council officers (and councillors who face surcharge) in Welwyn Hatfield have been trying to scrape together some of the £50m they owe in damages to developers Slough Estates over the grand retail centre cock-up (*Eyes passim*).

They want to sell the borough's 11,500 council homes to raise £30m, and a likely buyer has emerged in the shape of the Network Housing Corporation housing association.

Coincidentally, former council leader Ray Little, who was forced to resign the position last year when the £50m disaster emerged, is a housing needs officer for NHC.

Three years ago, when Little's hardware business went bust, Network bought his house and gave him a job. Soon after, the council tried to sell its housing stock and put a bid out to tender. Little declared an interest, but NHC was still chosen — the deal only being scuppered after tenants campaigned against.

Much more embarrassingly for the council, it now transpires that Welwyn didn't really need to pay out £50m of council taxpayers' money in damages at all. Four days before the hearing, Slough Estates offered the Labour council an out-of-court settlement which Welwyn refused. It would have cost just £16m.

IN BRIEF

WESTMINSTER: Two independent reports confirm the council's mad generosity to homeowners in the mid-80s when leaseholders were not charged for more than £7m of repairs and tenants made up the shortfall. The costly "lapse" could have been avoided if officers had not been forced to concentrate on the discredited designated sales policy of surcharged ex-leader Dame Shirley Tesco. Despite the implied criticism of the sales policy, opposition councillors say both reports are whitewashes. Allegations that the then Tory housing chair Peter Hartley didn't want bills sent out for fear of upsetting homeowners, thereby undermining attempts to gerrymander, remain unanswered.

BIRMINGHAM: The Labour council's new PR officer is charming and youthful Nicola Poultney, a former council temp now earning £33,471. She is sure to do a fine job — or she will have to answer to Labour group secretary Albert Bore, one of Birmingham's most important councillors. Bore is well placed to administer pep talks as he is Poultney's live-in legover.

CAMBRIDGE: The county council's records office in the city has become increasingly popular of late — so in a blinding stroke of logic the county has decided that "opening hours to the public will be reduced".

TOWER HAMLETS: The staunchly anti-racist Labour council is paying £50,000 to change the name of one of its most famous streets, Brick Lane, to "Bangla Town" in honour of the ethnic make-up of most of its inhabitants. The move has not gone down well with Bangladeshis who witnessed recent street battles with fascists from the British National Party and National Front — the NF and BNP name for the place also being "Bangla Town".

LOCAL MATHEMATICS

COUNCIL leaders are on the defensive in **South Lanarkshire** after agreeing to spend £200,000 to renovate their headquarters.

The project will also provide new offices for Labour MPs George Robertson and Dr John Reid — while the council tries to find budget savings of £18m. It has warned of possible council tax rises of between 8 and 10 percent.

Fife council, meanwhile, is making 400 staff redundant as part of a £20m cuts package — but no one seems to have told convenor John MacDougal of the dire financial position. He has spent £2,000 on a pink sofa and chairs to match the new decor in his office.

In **Oxford**, the "old" Labour-run city council is fed up with its run of bad publicity and so is employing someone to improve "news management" and "influence media coverage in a positive direction". The poor image that residents have of the council — not helped by news that government capping will lead to cuts of £2.4m in services — will be further eroded by the appointment of the spin doctor at around £25,000 a year.

RED FACE OF THE WEEK

ABSURD allegations are circling Southend following a report in the *Sunday Mirror* that the "mayor of a seaside town" has been caught in a "sex act" with a dog. All of which must be very embarrassing for Mr Howard Gibeon, Liberal Democrat mayor of Southend, and a dog alleged to be a bull mastiff.

Mr Gibeon, not known for his interest in animal rights, was allegedly caught by a neighbour in his garden before Christmas with the dog and was chased down the road — by the neighbour, not the mastiff. Fellow Lib Dem councillors rallied round, however, when they were told that Mr Gibeon wasn't fornicating with the animal, merely stroking it. Lib Dem colleague Paul Beckers was a bit surprised, however, remarking: "I didn't even know he had a dog." Mr Gibeon denies everything, but the crown prosecution service says there is a case to answer under section 5 of the public order act. Watch this space.

PETERS' 'FRIENDS'

MORE alarming details emerge of the desperate lengths to which Hackney council went to frame its former social services chair, Hettie Peters (see last issue).

Chief officers want to know why two Hackney housing benefit fraud officers were sent to another borough, Westminster, to search Peters' flat on evidence no stronger than a rumour put about within the local Labour party that she was on the fiddle and using the place as a brothel.

The officers were accompanied by Marylebone's Inspector Knacker, who has been regularly "helping" Hackney Labour leaders with inquiries into the lives of political opponents in the party. They found nothing at Peters' flat, mainly because she had been framed.

Hackney's housing benefit fraud manager Steve Talbot is worried. He is desperate not to advertise the story too widely, but is in a no-win situation. If he knew of the scam he could be implicated when Peters sues for damages; if he didn't know, it shows he has no knowledge of the shabby goings-on in his own department.

NUKES AND NUKEMEN

DOUNREAY's nuclear reprocessing and waste plant in Scotland is offering a novel interpretation of the words "open and honest".

Workers at the site have been told that its policy of "open and honest communication" does not mean they can speak openly or honestly in public about incidents at the plant.

A newsletter to staff clarified the position: "Obviously when issues of a security, personnel and commercial nature crop up in conversation we are not in a position to discuss these openly. Apart from that there is little we cannot talk about."

Management's concerns about public opinion have increased since crown immunity was lifted from the UK Atomic Energy Authority in 1990. Since then the Nuclear Installations Inspectorate (NII) has had a regulatory role, and accidents and environmental contamination which were brushed over or covered up for 40 years have come to light.

YOBS

HUSBAND

THE COOK, THE 'COPTER, THE EX-COP AND THE JUDGE

LAST week's *Mail on Sunday* revealed that Andrew Cook, chairman of William Cook plc, made "a speech full of abusive and racist remarks" to the Institute of British Foundrymen. It added that Cook, a barrister who has been getting £503,000 a year for running the biggest metal casting firm in Europe, denied being "influenced by drink" when he delivered his Alf Garnett tirade about the ghastliness of the Germans and Portuguese.

Two days earlier, the *Guardian* led its financial pages with a "shocking" claim that Cook had paid his son's nanny through the firm, and that his friend Emma Milligan had used a company car and collected a salary for "providing the potted plants".

This torrent of bad publicity may not be unrelated to a hostile £57.7 million takeover bid for William Cook plc by Triplex Lloyd, a West Midlands casting firm. The fun began almost as soon as the bid was launched last November, when a *Daily Telegraph* profile of Andrew Cook alleged that "he now holds a pilot's licence, drives a Bentley turbo and flies the company helicopter when the traffic looks bad".

There never was a company helicopter at William Cook plc, and Cook has no licence to fly one. But he could surely have foreseen Fleet Street's wild hostility towards his control of the family engineering firm which he rescued when his father thought it would collapse in the 1980 Thatcher slump. On 7 December last year, Christopher Fildes noted in the *Spectator* that Cook could claim to be "Britain's most incorrect chairman — politically, Cadbuarially, Euromanically". He predicted: "Now, I suppose, all this will be taken down and used in evidence against him." It duly was.

No harm in that. But not one scrap of balancing criticism of the business methods of his rivals at Triplex Lloyd has appeared in any Fleet Street organ, even though most news desks are aware that a document sent to Greater Manchester police in 1992 reveals that Triplex Lloyd used to pay £7,500 a month to a Manchester model agency boss who had tried to "sting" British Airways and is now serving 20 years for raping six of the young model girls on his books.

The man in question is Peter Martin, a former policeman, part-time private detective and erstwhile chum of Owen Oyston — the "socialist tycoon" who was separately convicted last year of raping and indecently assaulting one model from the agency.

While Martin was working for Triplex Lloyd — and being investigated by Greater Manchester police over the rape allegations — he was also being followed by a team of private detectives hired by British Airways. Thanks to the BA-Virgin "dirty tricks" row, we now have their report on the man Triplex Lloyd employed for special assignments.

Using the pseudonym "Peter Green", Martin approached BA's public affairs director David Burnside, falsely claiming that he had been hired by Virgin to investigate Lord King, the airline's chairman. After shadowing "Peter Green" in London, Manchester and Preston, the BA sleuths discovered that he was in fact Martin. In their report to British Airways, they noted that the model-agency boss also operated "a company specialising in corporate mergers and acquisitions. They claim to offer a highly confidential service, destroying incoming faxes, and state that they are willing to undertake any project of any kind."

If the Peter Martin connection proves too difficult for the *Guardian* to research, its hacks could easily balance that story about the potted plants with an account of Triplex Lloyd's stewardship of its foundries. They need look no further than the *Sheffield Star* of 6 November 1996, which reported Judge Robert Moore's conclusion that a Triplex Lloyd subsidiary, Firth Vickers Centrespinning Ltd, had "closed its eyes to the risks to employees" by leaving a defective guard on a casting machine, after repeated accidents.

The management had already been fined £10,000 after a man needed two skin grafts to recover from injuries suffered in a 1993 accident on the machine. Last year they pleaded guilty to the same offence, on the same machine. Two tonnes of molten metal, at 1500 degrees centigrade, had burst through the same gap, in a mould that was spinning at 245 mph. This time the metal hit three workers, one of whom suffered 40 per cent burns and was in hospital for 12 weeks.

"The accident came about because of complacency and corporate inaction," said prosecutor David Gordon. Fining the company £100,000, the judge declared that "the negligent activity seems to be recklessness... Those who employ others in a dangerous industry must take proper steps for their employees' safety or they will be punished."

Since the workers at William Cook plc may soon be at the tender mercies of Triplex Lloyd, isn't this life-threatening negligence at least as newsworthy as titbits about nannies, helicopters and after-dinner speeches? Apparently not.

LOCKERBIE LATEST

THE FBI forensic scientist who first linked the 1988 bombing of the Pan-Am airliner over Lockerbie to Libya has been sacked for fabricating evidence.

James Thurman, who claimed to link a fragment of circuit board allegedly found at Lockerbie to a Swiss timer device supplied to the Libyan armed forces, was exposed as a perjurer and fabricator in a big murder case last year. After a long inquiry, he has now been "removed".

RUBBISH

SOUTH WEST Water's plans for a vast rubbish dump in Magheramorne, East Antrim, are going swimmingly.

Blanket opposition from locals has so far not dissuaded Haul Waste, an SWW subsidiary, from its plan to create a superdump holding nine million tonnes of rubbish.

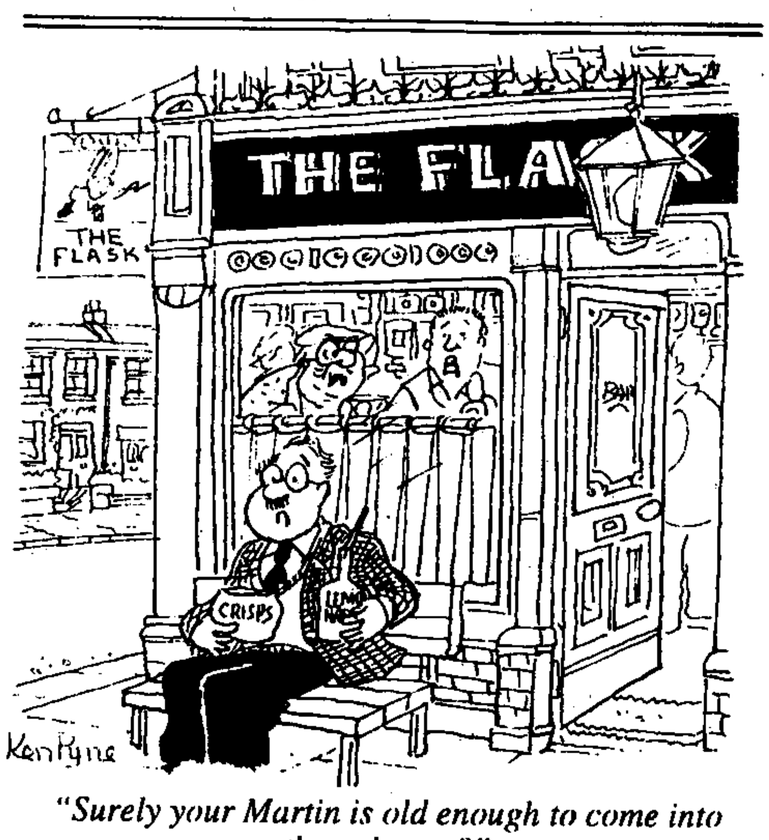
Residents fear that toxic leachate from the dump would seep into the waters of nearby Larne Lough, a site of special scientific interest. A public inquiry is under way to help the department of environment (Northern Ireland) decide whether to go ahead. The DoE is the only regulatory body to stop pollution in Ulster.

When protesters phoned the DoE to discuss the progress of the inquiry they were put through to one Tim Walker, an environmental scientist working at the DoE's waste management division. Only weeks before, the same campaigners had spoken to an employee of Haul Waste called, er, Tim Walker.

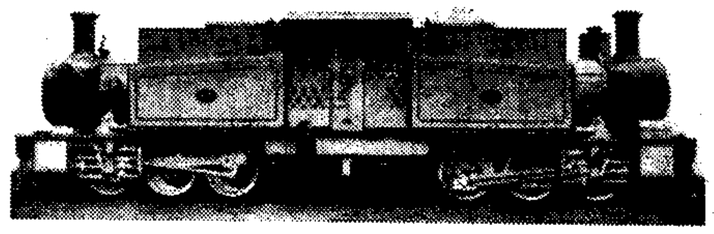
The alarm prompted by news that an employee of Haul Waste was on short-term contract to the DoE prompted local Unionist MP Roy Beggs to put down parliamentary questions to the secretary of state for Northern Ireland. For some reason the replies have failed to satisfy locals.

Walker was "deemed to be the best person for the job. However, because the department recognised a potential conflict of interest, steps have been taken to ensure that the consultant will not be involved with the department's consideration of... the Magheramorne landfill site."

So what *is* Walker doing? "He is engaged on work involved in the preparation of a Northern Ireland waste strategy."



"Surely your Martin is old enough to come into the pub now?"



SIGNAL FAILURES

THE daily news from Railtrack, which privatised the railway network, continues to explain the new year knighthood for its chairman, BP-reject Robert Horton.

On 17 January the share value slumped 15p on publication of the sharp comments of rail regulator John Swift. Swift had met the Railtrack board to denounce its plans for investment in maintenance of the permanent way and signalling, which he described as "wholly unacceptable".

This sort of thing greatly upsets the irascible Sir Bob who keeps hoping he can spend more time on his other interests. These include his non-executive chairmanship of an oil exploration company operating mainly in Russia and Eastern Europe called JKX Oil & Gas.

JKX doesn't seem to be doing as well as its chairman, who gets a retainer of £2,000 a month and another £1,250 for every day he actually works there. JKX shares were worth 190p when the company came to market in 1995. They are now down to 104p.

Even worse news comes from the Yorkshire-based electronics distributor Premier Farnell where shares have slumped in two weeks from 696p to 526p, and falling. The collapse is immediately due to a profits warning insisted on by the firm's broker, BZW, which led to a mighty row between the broker and Premier Farnell's chief executive, Howard Poulson.

The long-term problems of the company stem from the decision of the Farnell board to take over the much larger American firm Premier Industrial for a fantastic £1.8bn. The deal was heavily criticised at the time, and is still being attacked on all sides, but no one seems to give credit where it's due and name the man chiefly responsible: Farnell's non-executive director, Sir Robert Horton. Horton got to know the ageing Premier board during his time in the American oil industry, and persuaded Poulson and Co to risk the reverse takeover, which is now causing so much trouble (see *Eye* 898).

MANAGERS of train operating companies are delighted to be getting one-up on the engineers who once ruled the roost — but the low priority now accorded to engineering on the privatised railway is showing.

Andy Cooper, managing director of the recently privatised Anglia Railways, said on Radio 4 that BR used to be engineering-led "and by the way we also carried some customers". While it is true that engineers tended to dictate the services provided by BR until the late 1980s, the new railway apparently being championed by Mr Cooper is far from customer-led. Instead, it is profit-led, and the results are shorter commuter trains in Kent, a reluctance to hold connections when a train is late, an almost complete block on orders for new trains, and many other non-benefits for passengers.

Engineering is sidelined in this new order; and last month Railtrack was berated by the rail regulator for not investing enough in infrastructure. The latest Health and Safety Executive (HSE) report on railways shows the incidence of broken rails has increased from 2.26 to 2.56 per million train miles. Millions of pounds worth of new trains ordered by BR and long since delivered from the factories are still not being used to their full potential (see *Eyes passim*) because Railtrack's lawyers do not understand the engineering involved and are reluctant to authorise use of the new trains.

The journal of the union Aslef carries photographic evidence of missing track clips — the metal fixings which hold the rails in place — on the West Coast mainline. "How do you feel about driving trains on loose track, a lot of loose track?" writes one concerned driver, summing up the insecurity which abounds on a railway where engineers are subordinate to accountants and lawyers — and shareholders.

'Dr B. Ching'

Letters

Head boy

Sir,

I wish to protest at the sheer waste of taxpayers' money expended on your university education, as exemplified by the crass front cover of EYE *last week. It would be obvious to most people that the word that you were groping for was not "big" but "dick". See me after class.*

Regards,
DIANE FAIRHALL,
Settle, N. Yorks.

PS: I would not dream of cancelling my subscription.

Relative values

Sir,

*I shared the deep unease of your correspondents (*EYE *916) at the front page splash of Jerry Hayes' children, but I won't be cancelling my subscription. Although none of us would like our families used in this way, I'd have more sympathy if Tory MPs weren't so quick to use family photo-opportunities whenever there was advantage to be gained from it for themselves. If they want to be seen as family men they may need to restrain their relations.*

Yours faithfully,
PAUL DODD,
Westbury on Severn, Glos.

Once bitten...

Sir,

Having struggled with the whimsical labyrinths of Read codes in general practice for four years, I was fascinated by your Footnotes article and can only marvel at the life of a GP in Loughborough on which they must have been based. I think EYE *readers ought to have some examples. The exotic: "moray eel bite", "shark bite", "A/P (whatever that is — no one knows) in swamp... prairie... trailer court". The sinister: "legal injury — machine gun". The nonsensical: "war injury — rifle pellets". The fantastic: "spacecraft accidents..."*

Some common diagnoses are absent or hard to find and we have been forced to invent our own. I wish I had thought of it first.

Yours,
DR C.I. PELTON,
Telford, Shropshire.

Dawes

Horlick

Lookalike

Sir,

Surely I am not the only person to notice the startling resemblance between high-flying mother-of-five Nicola Horlick and the baby-faced scoremaster on BBC2's Shooting Stars, George Dawes. Are they, perchance, related in some way? I think Vic, Bob, Mark and Ulrik-ka-ka-ka-ka should be told.

Yours faithfully,
TIM MASTERS,
Via email.

Platform alteration

Sir,

Your HP comments (24 January) about Brent Spar and the decommissioning of offshore installations don't make much sense to the offshore industry, despite lashings of (irrelevant) innuendo about Tim Eggar's new job.

You should not have led readers to conclude it was ever the industry's intention to "dump" all the installations in the sea. IMO regulations, for one thing, require the industry to take away 75 percent of the 219 installations in UK waters — all of the lighter ones in shallower waters. I don't know how you got to "1,600 oil platforms" — did you add in the date by mistake?

The discussion is all about the 50 or so deep-water large steel or concrete platforms, though again most of these will in the event be recycled onshore. Even with these, if any parts thereof were by agreement to be left in the sea they would be of cleaned steel or concrete — hardly significant sources of pollution, if seaside piers, coastal sea-walls and countless wrecks are anything to go by.

As to costs, our estimates are for the whole UK bill to be about £4-5 billion in today's money, with roughly £1.5 billion being spent over the next ten years. Compare this with the amount, about £5 billion, the industry each year invests here — about a fifth of all UK productive industry investment. Now that's a positive story you could have written about.

Yours sincerely,
DR H.W.D. HUGHES OBE,
Director-General, UK Offshore Operators Association Limited.

A hint of a tint

Sir,

Edwin Moore, in his eagerness to defend his hero Patrick O'Brian, has been guilty of misrepresenting a far greater author and giving her rather more political correctness than she possessed.

Jane Austen was no racist — it is clear she did not approve of slavery — but to claim she was "colour-blind" and had "at least one black leading character" is doing it a bit too brown, no pun intended. Miss Lambe in Sanditon is described as "half-mulatto, chilly and tender". An interesting description, but that is all we hear about her. She never appears in person, nor is any word she has said or written quoted. It may be she was going to be a leading character, and equally it may be she was going to be a character who was spoken about but never met. I don't pretend to know and neither should Mr Moore. The only person who knew has been dead for 180 years.

What I do know is that Jane Austen, whatever her views on race, took an exceptionally dim view of male adulterers and deplored the fact that their punishment in this world was not equal to that meted out to adulteresses, though she hints at "a juster appointment hereafter". It's all in MANSFIELD PARK, *a novel in which a certain admiral gets a bad press for having a wife and a mistress. On this evidence you would have to conclude she would not have approved of Jack Aubrey one little bit.*

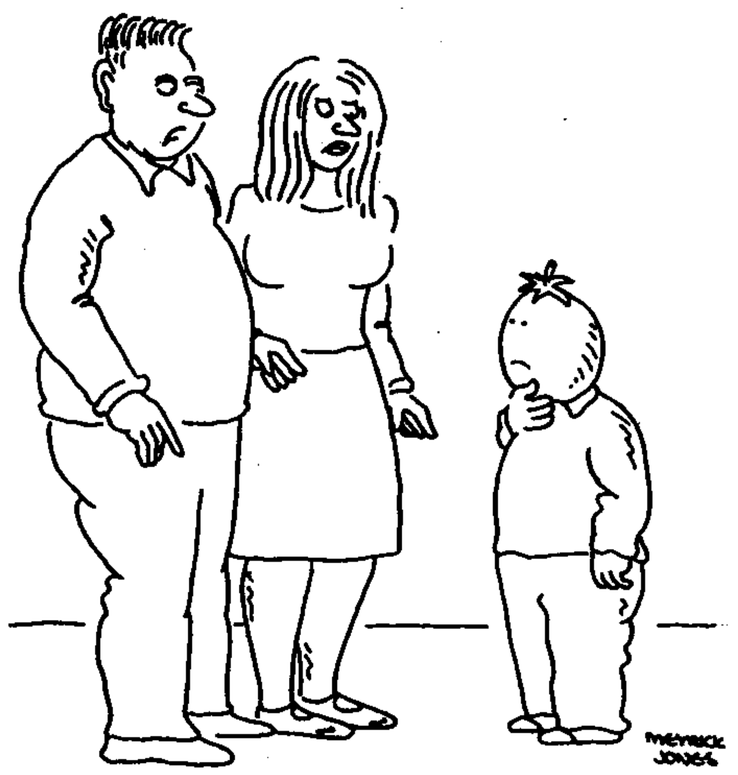
Yours faithfully,
MISS K. GLANCY,
Edinburgh.

Expropriate

Sir,

Your story on Ephraim Hardcastle needs some correction. The diary name was first used in the SUNDAY EXPRESS, *not the* DAILY EXPRESS, *in the late forties. The pseudonym was the choice of Beaverbrook and imposed upon me as the column's first editor, because, said his whimsical lordship, the first Ephraim (an 18th century scribbler, he believed) had been totally inept and unsuccessful. Peter Dacre, an old colleague of mine on the now defunct* NEWS REVIEW, *may have edited the column after I left the* SUNDAY EXPRESS.

Yours sincerely,
JOHN PREBBLE,
London SW1.



"We're not your real parents – actually you're a genetically modified tomato"

Laughlin-able

Sir,

I was interested to read Mr Laughlin's letter to you about my problems with the governors at Belfairs Community College where I was principal. Mr Laughlin, who was a junior teacher, left the school long before these problems arose — and his letter to PRIVATE EYE *is the first indication I have had from anyone as to why I was suspended so suddenly in 1994. His points can be dealt with quickly.*

1. The falling rolls in the school were entirely explicable in terms of demographic and policy changes for children of secondary school age in the Southend area.

2. There was no "mass exodus" of staff, as Mr Laughlin pretends.

3. No member of staff was "hounded out" of his/her job. These are nonsensical, mischief-making statements. No teacher, union representative or parent for that matter ever had occasion to pursue the grievance or complaints procedure with regard to my professional or personal conduct.

4. Mr Laughlin's implied criticism of me and his description of the school when I was principal as "full of fear and paranoia" should be compared to the assessments of inspectors who came to the school when I was principal. I quote (not selectively) from two of them: "Staff who approach the Principal for help and advice for personal problems find a warm and sympathetic listener..." "Relationships with students with whom she comes into contact are excellent..." "Dealing with parents are professional, sympathetic where appropriate and firm where necessary... The methods she used for dealing with people were beyond reproach..." "She was always polite, reasonable and proper in every communication which I witnessed..." "In my private discussions I did not hear any criticism of her..." "I never had cause to doubt that I was working with a competent manager... handling change with a proper sense of priority and what was right for the pupils but also with skill and sensitivity".

Yours sincerely,
MARIE YOUNIE,
Southend, Essex.

● ***Thanks to all the parents and teachers who wrote in support of Ms Younie. Ed.***

Block buster

Sir,

I would be grateful if you could refrain from perpetuating the total myth that the BBC director-general blocked transmission of a NEWSNIGHT *report on British Airways. He did not.*

COLIN BROWNE,
Director of Corporate Affairs, BBC.

I-SPY
Vienna

I-SPY
Zimbabwe

Submitted by M. Kenneth and Julian Hall. £10 paid for similar submissions. *(SAE required for return of photographs. No transparencies.)*

Smear attest

Sir,

Re: Media News (EYE *915). That smears and facts never mix are once more proven by your preposterous allegations about my writings.*

1. PONTIFF *most certainly did not claim Pope John Paul I was murdered. That allegation was promoted by David Yallow in his book* IN GOD'S NAME. PONTIFF *took the very opposite view — that the pope died of natural causes, a view supported by the Vatican.*

2. The details about the attempted attack on Pope John Paul II came from the former Papal Nuncio to Ireland, Archbishop Alibrandi, in a lengthy taped interview with me — the contents of which the Nuncio has never challenged.

3. The CIA subsequently confirmed to the WASHINGTON POST *that satellite surveillance was used to try and locate the hostages. My story did not state that Terry Waite had been "spotted" by satellite in Beirut.*

4. I was not "investigated" by the Canadian RCMP. Rather, I was interviewed by their complaints commission regarding the way two members of the Canadian security service dealt with me while on a book promotion tour of Canada. My book dealt with illegal or secret brainwashing experiments conducted on Canadian citizens on behalf of the CIA in the 50s.

5. I cannot comment on your scurrilous attack about my Bishop Casey interview, published in the SUNDAY INDEPENDENT *(not the* IRISH INDEPENDENT*) except to say that my own professional body, the Chartered Institute of Journalists, is satisfied the interview took place, and is supported by photographs to that effect. The case is presently due for hearing in the high court where I am suing the* SUNDAY INDEPENDENT. *That is the only fact about the matter you have previously reported accurately.*

Yours sincerely,
GORDON THOMAS,
Co. Wicklow, Ireland.

The money maize

Sir,

*In reply to Brian Basham's "Letter From Malawi" (*EYE *915), I feel impelled to take issue with some of his statements.*

Mr Basham claims that, "the people of Malawi, for the first time since independence, are experiencing starvation, the collapse of law and order and widespread corruption". I was in Malawi in 1992 when drought shrivelled the maize crop to practically nothing. While the maize wilted before our eyes, the DAILY TIMES *(Malawi's only newspaper) trumpeted Banda's predictions of a bumper crop. Once again it was the "best year ever" and as a result of the government's refusal to admit to a problem until a few weeks before the harvest, people starved.*

As for corruption, presumably Mr Basham does not regard the use of hundreds of thousands of dollars of government money to finance shopping sprees to England and the USA for Banda and his retinue as corruption. Are we to assume that the arbitrary imprisonment without trial of anyone holding opinions divergent from the president's own is not a corrupt practice? What about nepotism? What about the use of the Malawi Young Pioneers to intimidate and bully the population into buying party cards? What about killing political opponents? But, as Mr Basham says, at least the country had law and order...

The fact that Dr Banda was able to hand over power to a democratically elected government with good grace is due to the incredible restraint, level-headedness and dignity of the long-suffering Malawian people and not because of any statesmanlike qualities of a bigoted old tyrant.

Doubtless the new government has its faults, but at least it was chosen, at least those faults are exposed by a free press, and at least no member of the opposition has yet met with a fatal "accident". The days of systematic, political repression for the people of Malawi are over and I think Mr Basham needs to think a little more deeply about who it is that owes them an apology.

Yours faithfully,
MIKE BIRD,
Bingley, W. Yorks.

Colemanballs

£10 paid for contributions

"It was the most humiliating feeling you could ever wish for."
B GOULD, BBC1
(Delano Minett)

"He [Arsene Wenger] gives us unbelievable belief."
IAN WRIGHT, BBC1
(Graham Mills)

Michael Barrymore: *And what do you do for a living?*
Contestant: *I'm a gravedigger.*
MB: *And do you have any hobbies?*
Contestant: *Yes, I have an allotment.*
ITV
(F. Dunnill)

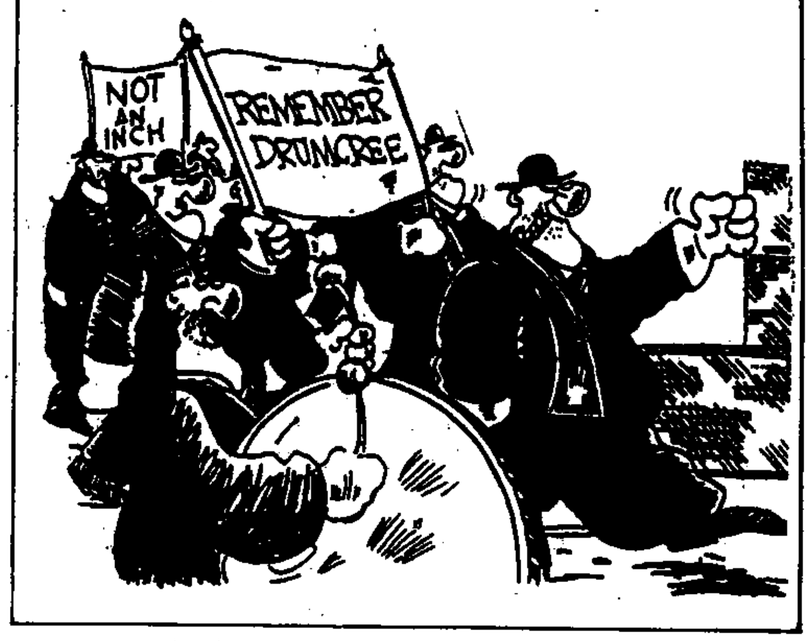
"The problem is that there's no middle ground in football any more — and we are in that middle ground."
JOE ROYLE, Liverpool Echo
(T. Gates)

"Di Mateo has just blown his nose on the touchline."
SIMON BROTHERTON, Radio 5
(J.R. Seymour)

HOM SAP

AUSTIN

Orangemen Behaving Badly



Letter From **Pakistan**

from Our Own Correspondent

SADLY, much of what I predicted in my last letter (*Eye* 911) has come to pass; and while your British journalists have been following Imran and Jemima, the real stories are still being ignored.

The problem now is that while president Farooq Leghari and his Inter-Services intelligence people would like nothing better than to hang Asif Zardari, Benazir Bhutto's jailed husband and the former minister for kickbacks in her dissolved government, they still have to find the smoking gun — or at least something that pretends to be the smoking gun.

Perhaps after Bhutto's crushing defeat in the elections witnesses will be found to incriminate her husband. But why does Leghari loathe Zardari quite so much?

In Pakistani politics, the personal has become the political. In order to keep Leghari sweet, an attempt was made by Benazir and Zardari's faction to blackmail him. Leghari's daughter was secretly filmed in a passionate clinch with her boyfriend and the video was sent to the president, who exploded and decided to cave in to army demands that the Bhutto couple be dumped forthwith.

The only way Benazir might have won the day would have been to discard Zardari as an adulterer and a rogue. This would have won her overnight popularity. Interestingly enough, for the last few weeks Benazir has not been talking about "my innocent husband" at public meetings. The paisa seems to have dropped — but too late.

The change seems to have been brought about by another set of videos and tapes, which the intelligence services have been supplying to her, gratis. These apparently show husband Zardari discussing Uganda rather than Pakistan.

Benazir has even been told to believe that Zardari got married secretly last summer to a divorced interior decorator from Lahore, Iram Qureshi, daughter of a senior civil servant. The fragrant Iram denies all talk of marriage, but is remarkably coy about all else. "I'm a friend of Benazir's..." she was heard saying a few days ago. News of all this seems to have slightly deranged Benazir. Her speeches have been lacklustre and she seems to be suffering from delusions and paranoia. She finds it difficult to accept that the poor have become cynical and are not flocking to support her. This is hardly surprising since she did nothing for them. What hurts the most is the way the Americans have abandoned her after her government, on Washington's instructions, helped put the crazed Taliban fundos in power in Kabul. She is now seriously thinking about quitting politics and retiring to the French riviera.

The only question remaining is: who is the signatory on the foreign bank accounts? This might explain the delay in parting company with the errant Zardari, whose father and stepmother tell anyone and everyone how their "innocent boy" has been brought to ruin by the greed of the Bhuttos.

Nawaz Sharif may win the election, but it'd be premature of his fat cat friends to celebrate. The army is again in Washington's good books because of the Taliban business. And somewhere, hidden from us all, a general's election is taking place.

FUNNY OLD WORLD

"This afternoon, my cousin was run over by a combine harvester. But I felt that it was such a pity for a maiden girl in full flower to have died that I resolved to find her a husband anyway. I have done nothing wrong."

Niu Shumin, from Wang Gang village in central Henan province, was defending his conduct to a reporter from the *China Youth News*, shortly after being arrested for trafficking in dead bodies. "Lin was hit and killed by the harvester in the

village, and her family left the remains of her body by the roadside while they decided on the burial. But I had heard that a bereaved couple in the next town, the Hu family, were looking for a bride for their dead son, who had just committed suicide. Lin was only 19 and, because she had no husband in the light of day, I wanted to find her a partner in the dark of night to avoid loneliness. I telephoned Mr Hu, who agreed to send me 500 yuan in advance. I delivered the body next day in the back of my noodle van but, when I arrived, Hu shouted abuse and complained that the head was missing. I told him to use a large melon and to stick a veil over it, but he called the police. I wonder if it's worth trying to do anyone a good turn." *(Arab News, 5/11/96. Spotter — John Welz)*

—o—

"I took this bribe from the President in good faith," Stephen Mumbaza of the People's Democratic Party told a press conference in Lilongwe, Malawi. "He promised me twenty thousand kwacha, some carpeting and a minibus if I withdrew from the election. I did as he asked, but now we are three months on and I have still received nothing. It is a disgrace. Politics in this country is totally corrupt."

A spokesman for President Bakili Muluzi of the United Democratic Front agreed that a bribe had been offered, but there had been no formal contract. "The President has confirmed to me that he met with Mumbaza, but he only offered him thirty-five bags of fertiliser to stand down in the by-election. This was delivered to Mumbaza's house the day after the election, which the UDF won. At no time was there any mention of carpeting or a minibus." *(AFP January 1997. Spotter — Platts-McGraw-Hill)*

—o—

"It's Teodoro's own fault that he's dead," students at the Philippine Women's University told police when they arrived to investigate a killing at the Saint Joseph Dormitory in Sampaloc, Manila. "We never thought he would stoop so low as to hit Leo with a baseball bat like that, especially considering his age and his status as a preacher."

One of Leo Uson's roommates explained the circumstances that culminated in the death of Teodoro Diaz, a 60-year-old priest, on Saturday night. "Five of us were preparing to go to sleep in the dormitory when Teodoro farted. The smell was foul, and Leo berated him for not going outside to fart, saying that what he did did not speak well of him as a preacher, but Teodoro just laughed and farted again. They argued for some hours, until Teodoro finally lost his cool and began beating Leo on the head with a baseball bat, shouting 'Go to sleep the Joe di Maggio way, you shitty, shitty bag!' That was when Leo finally lost his patience, grabbed the breadknife, and killed him with a single thrust. And in my opinion he was quite right to do so."

After hearing the testimony, police decided to charge Uson only with homicide, not murder. (Today [Philippines], 9/12/96. Spotter — Chris Gorham)

COMPILED BY

Victor Lewis-Smith

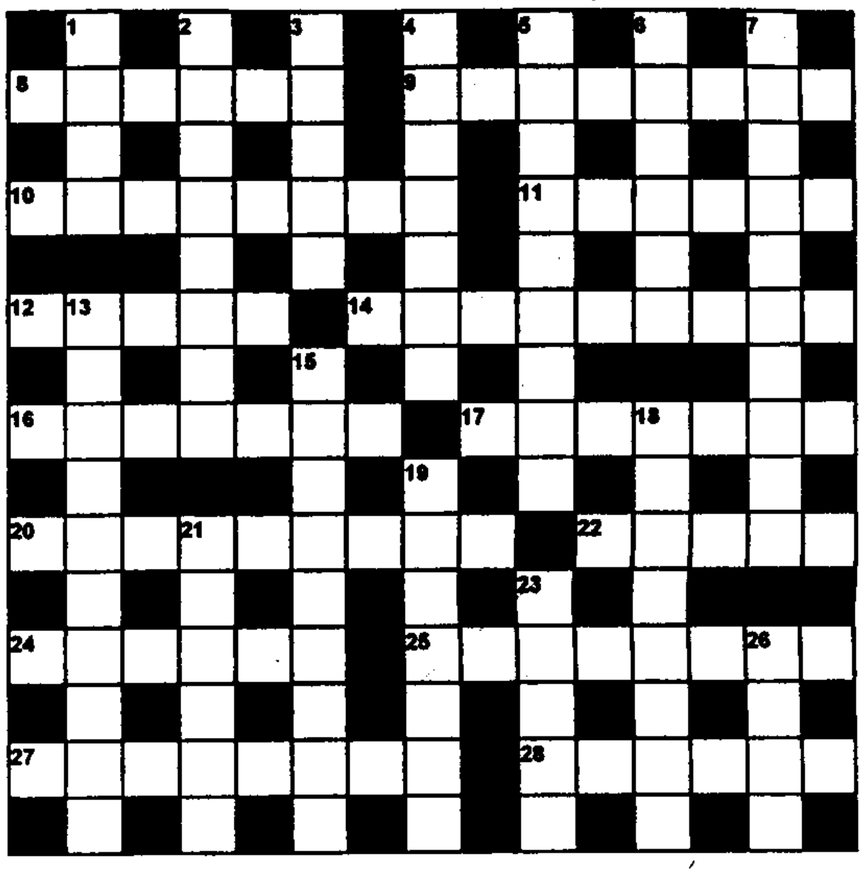
The Lottery Winners

TURNER

IT AMAZES ME, MAN, ALL THAT MONEY BUT YOU'RE STILL DOWN HERE ON T'TERRACES WITH YER MATES.
AYE, BUT YOU'VE GOT TO GET THINGS IN PERSPECTIVE..
...MY £3½ MILLION'S WORTH SHEARER'S LEFT LEG!

EYE CROSSWORD 72

by Cyclops — *£100 prize*



ACROSS

8 Kenneth, note, left from Auckland pissed (6)
9 Churchmen against replacing first of medieval organs (8)
10 Leo gets disorientated with a lift going down (8)
11 (see 12)
12/11/19 Beastly idol likely to lack balls in such adverse conditions? (5,6,7)
14 Formal sign of early stages of an election (9)
16 Really nasty character supplying filth with pot (7)
17 For each female DIY fiasco there's an act of infidelity (7)
20 Such an erotic performer needs her own portable ventilation! (3,6)
22 'Diddles', the familiar topless poser's catching cold... (5)
24 ... it's a feat hiding double-D with one fan! (6)
25 Epic time before, that is, Hilda ballsed up (3,5)
27 No good Brenda taking interest in whopper bras and such (8)
28 Breathing heavy? No good getting this sort of paperback, then! (6)

DOWN

1/26 One usually seen in the thick of trouble upset by Aitken aide dropping in (4,4)
2 American representative has relations with a boss of the British agent (5,3)
3 (see 7)
4 Increase what you have and get stuffed (2,5)
5 Do a corporate hatchet job? (9)
6 Point awarded to anger wayward German scorer (6)
7/3 Jammy bunch at a loss as to exactly how to pop the question? (10,5)
13 'One repeatedly gets mounted by husband on the telly' — our maligned monarch (7,3)
15 Shacks up with Monsieur Bull, as campaigning politicians may well do (9)
18 Mug up the wrinkly's resort? (4-4)
19 (see 12)
21 Sounds like Deedes' whatsits (6)
23 Rate casual love (5)
26 (see 1)

£100 prize to first correct solution opened on 14.02.97. Entries to "Crossword", Private Eye, 6 Carlisle Street, London W1V 5RG.

Solution to Crossword No. 71

Winner: PETER COTTON

ACROSS: 1 Psyche 4 Stitch up 10 Le Monde 11 Winston 12 Tangy 13 Loincloth 14 Cutting 16 Salvage 19 Lolling 21 Uproots 22 Pipe dream 24 Night 26 Neo-Nazi 27/28 William of Orange 28 (see 27) 29 Angler.
DOWN: 1/7 Political hot potato 2 Yemen 3 Henry VIII 5 Townies 6 Tonic 7 (see 1) 8 Punch 9 Jet lag 15 Telephoto 17 Lord Nolan 18 East Timor 20 Goering 21 Unmown 22 Pinko 23 Diana 25 Grill.

The Secret Diary of John Major aged 47¾

Sunday

Today was a historic day, when I summoned all the cabinet to Chequers, which is my country house in the country, to discuss our plans for winning the election.

On the advice of Mr Dr Mawhinney, I allowed all the journalists to film me wearing a cable-knit jersey. This was to show how relaxed I am about the election, although naturally when the cameras had gone I changed back into a suit like everyone else.

We then got down to the important business of comparing our diaries to choose the date when the election will be. We found that everyone was very busy until May 1st, which coincidentally is the last day that we are allowed to hold the election. Mr Waldegrave looked in his All Souls diary and tried to ruin things by pointing out that May 1st is "Labour Day". "Then we shall change it," I told him, "to Conservative Day." Everyone laughed, which showed what good spirits we are in.

I then asked them all in turn for their suggestions as to how we were going to win the election, and everyone laughed again. These were their ideas:

Mrs Bottomley: free disabled access to Stonehenge on Tuesdays, to be financed by the National Lottery.

Mrs Shephard: 11-Plus style exams for entry to primary schools, to be called the 5-Plus.

Mr Howard: a prison in every town and village in the country, plus prison ships on every lake and village pond. To be financed by the National Lottery.

Mr Hogg: a new independent Food Safety Inspector, to say how well the Government is doing in handling the weekly food scares.

Mr Dr Mawhinney: a new poster showing Mr Blair as Hitler, with the slogan "New Labour — New Concentration Camps".

Mr Portaloo: compulsory cadet corps in all secondary schools, to institute the values of Conservatism by preparing the nation's young people to shoot Labour voters in the Civil War that would be sparked by a Blair election victory; also, to buy the Queen a new yacht and thus capitalise on the current popularity of the Royal Family.

Everyone agreed that these were all brilliant ideas, especially Mr Portaloo's, but none was a good as mine which was as follows:

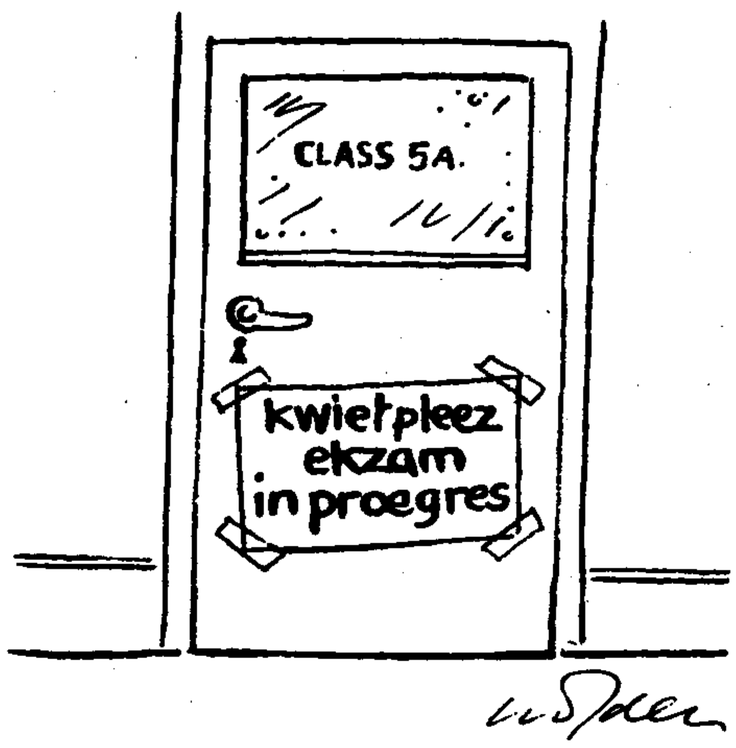
J. Major, Prime Minister: that everyone should be allowed a day-off on January 1st 2000 to mark the Millennium.

As usual Mr Cleverdick Waldegrave tried to spoil everything by looking up his All Souls Diary Advance Planner which showed that January 1st 2000 is on a Saturday. "Never mind," I said. "We can have the next day off instead." "What does it matter?" said Mr Heseltine. "We won't be in power anyway." This was a very good joke, which cheered everyone up.

Monday

The papers have given our secret election-winning plans huge coverage, especially Mr Portaloo's very silly idea about spending £60 million of taxpayers' money on a new yacht. All the papers are against it, as are the public and the Queen. Even Sir Edward Heath was interviewed on the Today programme, saying it was a bad idea and he should know because he was a great expert on boats, having won the Round-Cowes Handicap 1969, which was more than Mrs Thatcher had ever done.

I am not inconsiderably annoyed with Mr Portaloo for coming up with such a



ridiculous proposal and not telling me about it. I am also not inconsiderably incandescent with rage against my brother Terry, who is quoted in all the newspapers on the subject of my years in the school CCF. "John asked Mr Blenkinsop whether he could be excused the Corps," Terry told all the reporters, "because of his bad eyesight. But we all know the real reason — Corps was on Thursday afternoons, which was Mrs Kierans' day off."

Tuesday

Everyone is for some reason making a great fuss about the fact that we have been defeated in both the House of Lords and the House of Commons. Mr Howard's bill allowing the police to listen in to everyone's telephone conversations was thrown out by the Lords, but this is not at all important, as the police do it anyway. The other so-called defeat on education only came about because our Whips can't count any more. This only goes to show how much more we have to do to bring Britain's schools up to the level of those in Turkey and Ecuador. Oh yes. As I told my wife Norman, it doesn't matter how many times we are defeated. We are still in control. I will have the election on May 1st and not a day earlier, as I have decided. "Surely," she said, "April 1st would be more appropriate?" "Oh no," I said, "we could not have the election on April 1st because it is a Tuesday and elections are always on Thursdays." As usual, Norman has displayed her ignorance about matters political.

Wednesday

I have received an exceedingly rude letter from a Japanese gentleman called Mr Phuwatascorcha of Toyotas-R-Us, the car conglomerate. "You listen me good, Johnny Major. You sign up to Euro, or it's Sayonara. Understand?" I am taking no notice at all of this very impertinent letter, and I have written a sharp note to Mr Phuwatascorcha saying that I will join the Euro at once, if that is what he wants.

Thursday

Mr Blair is trying to outwit me by getting his wife to change her hairstyle. This will not help him at all. Oh no. It is like him changing his policies, which has not made him any more popular. He is still only 25 points ahead. "He will be wearing a woolly jumper next and eating frozen cheese," I said. "He is desperate to copy me in every detail."

"Yes," said Norman. "He's even going to live in Downing Street for the next five years."

Friday

People are constantly asking me if I have decided on the election date. Of course I have. It is May 1st. Unless it is March 20th. Or some other date.

Gardiner's Question Time

Caller: We've just moved to Reigate and we found this long-established old MP in our patch. He's very unsightly and runs wild, rambling all over the place. What would you advise?

Dr Mawhinney: Well, it sounds to me like you've got a nasty case of Euroscepticus. It's a sort of very dry rot, and once it sets in it's likely to spread throughout the constituency. There's only one way to get rid of it and that's deselection. Dig him up and throw him out. Then put in his place a nice little creeper who is easy to train and won't call the Prime Minister a ventriloquist's dummy.

Caller: Thank you.

END OF LINE SALE

EVERYTHING MUST GO — EXCEPT THE TRAINS

Due to a forthcoming general election and the need to raise funds at any price, there now arises a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to buy an underground network — complete or in parts — for your very own.

It consists of the following items:

● **100,000 miles of track and tunnel. Yours for £35 ono.**

● *100 trains decorated with world-renowned graffiti by local artists. £7.35 each.*

● **300 platforms complete with angry people wondering where the train is. £5 each or buy two and get one free.**

● *30 important mosaic murals by artist Sir Eduardo Paolozzarubbish. 10p each.*

● **35,000 escalators and lifts — some working. £1.50 (+ VAT).**

● *Tape recording of 1930s man saying "Mind The Gap", "Stand Clear of the Doors" and "Pass Right Down Inside the Cars". £1,783.24p.*

PLUS FREE!

● **200 assorted musicians, including guitarist singing Beatles selection, saxophonist playing Dave Brubeck's "Take Five", and African drummer playing medley of Zairean tribal hits.**

☞ **Apply at once to Sir George Young, Minister of Transport quoting "Everything Must Go" offer.**

The next privatisation will be along in 10 minutes. Customers are advised to use their cars.

SOCCER

MAJOR AND BLAIR PROTEST AT BRITAIN'S FAILURE TO HOST TOP CONTEST

by Our Political Staff **E.I. Erewevote**, Our Man With The Union Jack T-Shirt, No Trousers And A Copy Of "The Castle Of Lies" By Dr C. Barkworth

THE Prime Minister and the leader of the opposition both protested today at the decision to hold the next General Election in Germany.

"Britain is the traditional home of British elections," said a joint spokesman. "We have all the facilities here to host our own General Election in 2002 and it is unfair for the Germans to go behind our backs and stage the event themselves."

LATE SCORE
Wirral League

Labour	14,762
Conservative	0
	(own goal Major)

LATE NEWS

1939 – Germany to host next World War

TV Highlights

Identical Twins
Channel 4

ALAN AND Kenneth Clark were separated at birth. One was brought up in a castle, the other sent to a state school. Uncannily, both became senior figures in the Conservative party. Though one is left of centre and the other extremely right of centre, they both share a deep respect for one another's viewpoint. Alan believes Kenneth is "a vulgar little parvenu who probably buys his own shoes". Kenneth thinks Alan is a "lazy, good-for-nothing aristocrat who landed us in the shit over Iraq".

Tonight they are reunited in the television studio where they exhibit an almost supernatural similarity in their ability to talk rubbish in the hope of getting elected.

POETRY CORNER

In Memoriam: Godfrey Basely, Creator of *The Archers*.

So. Farewell
Then Godfrey
Basely. Creator of
The Archers.

Tum ti tum ti
Tum ti tum.
Tum ti tum ti
Tum tum.

Yes. That was
Your signature
Tune.

And now
There's still a
Few moments
Before the next
Programme so
There's time to
Take a look
At what's coming
Up on
Radio 4.

E.J. Thribb (17½)

Coming soon

Fierce Critics

THE STORY of John Cleese's frantic attempts to save his film from being shut down by critics who say it isn't any good. Cleese fights manfully against the owners of the studio who tell him to make it funny. "Funny isn't everything," says Cleese and dresses up to go on the Des O'Connor Show, the Chris Evans Show, and Radio Trent's Good Morning Trent Show. Will he save the film?

What the critics said

"I laughed... good evening... return of the gold standard" — Milwaukee Sentinel

"Python... man... Cleese..." — Radio WGBNKY, Boston.

"New... film... out" — Cyrus B. Spenckin

COURT CIRCULAR

The Prince of Wales will today attend the Rumpingdon Hunt, Beds. He will be riding Old Flame and will be met by representatives of the international press corps including Signor Slizi Giornali from the Italian magazine *Lecho!* Mr Kevin Orrid of the *Sun* newspaper and Monsieur Jean-Paul Longue-Lènse from the best selling French periodical *UK Titz et Bumz*. They will attempt to take his photograph alongside Mrs Camilla Parker-Bowles but will be disappointed.

The Procession of the Hunt will be as follows:

1st Horse
HRH The Prince of Wales, on Old Flame.

2nd Horse (½ Hour Later)
HRH Camilla, Princess of Highgrove on Naughty Boy.

3rd Horse
Brigadier Sir Rumswell Rednose KGB, OMC, PG, HGV, DVLC, RSVP on Punch Drunk.

1st Hound
Tyson

2nd Hound
O.J. Simpson

3rd Hound
Von Bulow

1st Fox
Edward

1st Saboteur
Mr Dave Beard

2nd Saboteur
Miss Sarah Anorak

1st Policeman
Inspector Knacker, Bedfordshire Anti-Saboteur Armed Response Unit

1st Range Rover
Miss Tamara Puree-Pilkington; Miss Santa Barbara Trilby Tompson; Miss Tasmina Fanta Lemonade-Beckworth Smythe. *(That's enough. Ed)*

Memorial Service

A service of thanksgiving for the life and work of Mrs "Marje" Proops was held at St Brides Church, Ludgate. The Rev J.C. Flannel officiated. The following hymns were sung: "Riders in the Sky" (F. Lane), "Shrimp Boats Are A-Comin' In" (A. Cogan) and "Sexual Healing" (M. Gaye).

Miss Glenda Slagg read "How to Keep Hubby Happy in Bed" from Chapter 7 of the *Daily Mirror Book of Sex Tips* (editor M. Proops).

Mr.Lunchtime O'Booze related an anecdote concerning Mrs Proops, her long-time lover and a parrot who could only say "Cor! What a big one!".

A tribute from the late Robert Maxwell was read out by Mr Joe Haines.

Those present included a number of senior Agony Consultants including Ms Molly Barmy, Ms Claire de Looney, Ms Linda Blimey and Ms Jackie Tacky.

The reception was held at El Winos.

Last Night of the Conservatives

Rule Britannia,
Britannia rules the waves.
Britons never, never, never
Shall pay for another one.

(Traditional)

GNOMEBY'S
Established 1983

To Be Sold At Auction
Property Of A Lady (Di)

Highly important collection of dresses and other personal items.

Due to an unforeseen divorce, the following lots have become available:

1. 1 Highly Desirable Wedding Dress. As seen on television. Created by Emmanuella Strobes for the owner. Only once used.

2. 1 Highly Important Bridal Nightgown. As not seen on television. Designed by Lady Ann Summers of Filth Street, Soho. Unused, still in original box.

3. 3,000 Assorted State Evening Gowns, worn on various occasions between 1981 and 1989. Variously designed by Jaspan La Plante, Giovanni Costalotti, Neville Gaytrouser, Balon de Montparnasse, Mikimousi, Marks and Spencer and other Highly Important International Couturiers.

4. Another lot, similar to the above.

5. Highly Important Watercolour Painting (12in by 8in) of "Ben Ochri By Moonlight", signed and inscribed by the artist: "To Diana, with best wishes on our 2nd anniversary. Charles".

6. Highly Important Watercolour Painting (12in by 8in) of "Glen Fiddich By Moonlight", signed and inscribed by the artist: "To Diana, with kind regards on our 3rd anniversary. The Prince of Wales".

7. First Edition of "Travels in the Kalahari" by Sir L. van der Post, inscribed by the author on title page: "To my dear Charles. May the tree of knowledge bear many melons in the desert of your marriage to that ghastly woman. Your old friend and mentor L.". Mint in dustwrapper, unopened.

8. 1 Highly Desirable and Historic Sapphire and Diamond Tiara, created by Fabergé for the Grand Duchess Legova of Smirnoff, presented to Her Late Majesty Queen Victoria on the occasion of her Jubilee 1897, with accompanying autograph note in the hand of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II: "You can wear this tonight, Diana, but please make sure you return it in the morning. E.R."

9. 1 Highly Important Sony Walkman (c. 1982), plus accompanying box containing a number of cassette tape recordings, all highly worn out, by the following highly important singing artistes: Wham, Wet Wet Wet, Bros, Sir Philip Collins, Lord Eric of Clapton, Dire Straits and Nigel Kennedy.

Sale Commences On Date Yet To Be Chosen In Order To Embarrass Her Majesty The Queen.

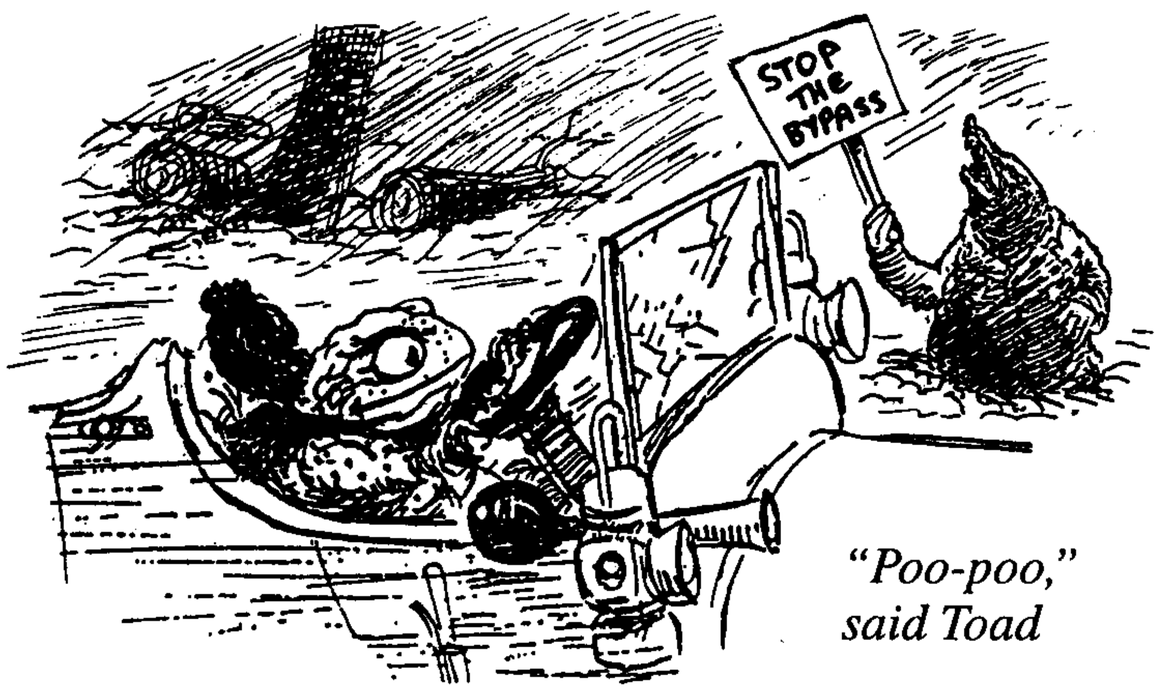
LONDON ABU DHABI TOKYO

TORYTIME: The Tale of Mrs. Tiggy-Winkle

SPRING BOOKS

The By-Pass Through The Willows

by Kenneth Grahamotorway



"Poo-poo," said Toad

CLASSIC children's tale of how the car-mad Toad wants to drive all over the countryside on vast dual carriageways. Mole bravely goes underground with his friends "Animal" and "Swampy" to protest against the scheme, but the weasels are in Government and they send in the stoats to flush the little creatures out. Look out for the unhappy ending. Not suitable for children.

GUPPY CHOSEN FOR SAFE TORY SEAT

by Our Political Staff **Matthew Gay-Paree**

THE POLITICAL WORLD was rocked to its foundations last night when the selection committee of the safe Tory seat of Mayfair and Park Lane chose Mr Darius Guppy as their prospective candidate.

At the last election the Tory majority was 700 million.

At a packed meeting in the Archer Hall, Shepherds Market, Mr Guppy defeated his three rivals, Mr Suit, Mr Greyman and Ms Token-Woman, to general acclamation.

Very Fishy

After the vote, the constituency chairman Sir Simon Moneybags told waiting newsmen: "We are absolutely delighted that Mr Guppy has agreed to be our candidate.

"We are very fortunate to have someone of Mr Guppy's calibre as our standard bearer at the forthcoming election.

"He is a colourful personality who has lived life to the full and who is not afraid to speak his mind, or commit the odd insurance fraud, should the need arise."

Others were impressed by the frank way in which Mr Guppy coped with questions from the floor.

When asked "Aren't you a bit of a crook, old boy?", he won everyone over with his witty reply: "Of course I am. Why do you think I am standing as a Conservative?"

He spoke candidly about his life in prison, promising his future constituents that from now on he would be "a good boy" and would support Mr Major on everything.

Mr Guppy succeeds the sitting, or lying, MP Sir Nicholas Scotch, who has resigned in order to spend more time with his bottles.

1992 Mayfair and Shepherds Market East

Sir N. Scotch (Con)	**700,000,003**
S.P. Merrydown (LibDem)	**3**
Ted Trot (Old Lab)	**0**
Screaming Lord Scotch	**Disqualified**

Tory majority: 700 million

Harry Enfield's **Class Bores** Drawn by **Michael Heath** **6. Conflicting Lifestyle Options**

"I mean it's well out of order, yeh? I mean the Council is acting in a toe-ally fascistic manner tryin' to evict us, yeh? I mean we ain't doin' no harm to anyone, yeh? I mean all the farmer would be doin' wiv this field if we wasn't here would be usin' it to plant some toe-ally unacceptable and fascistic cash-crop and pu'in profit before people, yeh? and no way is the council gonna get away wiv stoppin' us signin' on, yeh? Cos we know the law cos Tabaffer here, right, 'er Daddy's 'n 'igh Court Judge and he told 'er our rights when she's gone 'ome last week to get 'er munffly allowance. and all the local residents wot 'ave complained about us is just, like, so obsessed wiv their material possessions and think we're a freat to their, like, bourgeois way of life, yeh? Cos they fink our lifestyle is toe-ally alien to their narrer way of finkin', yeh? and these people make me sick, yeh? *...jumped up bloody oiks in their ghastly modern mock-tudor homes who the hell do they think they are? I tell you, when I inherit my father's title I'll get a law through the House of Lords banning suburban social climbers...* I mean er... come the revolution these people will, like, be liberae-ed from their false-conshusness and voluntarily give up their toe-ally unacceptable lifestyles, yeh?"

MPs VOTE FOR THRASHING

by Our Political Staff **Simon Floggart**

A HUNDRED Conservative MPs rebelled against the Prime Minister last night in a desperate bid to see the government thrashed.

"Yes — we want to be well beaten," said Sir Bufton Tufton (MP for Trouser Down, County Antrim). "A damn good walloping is the only way this party will ever learn to behave itself. It's the only language we Conservatives understand."

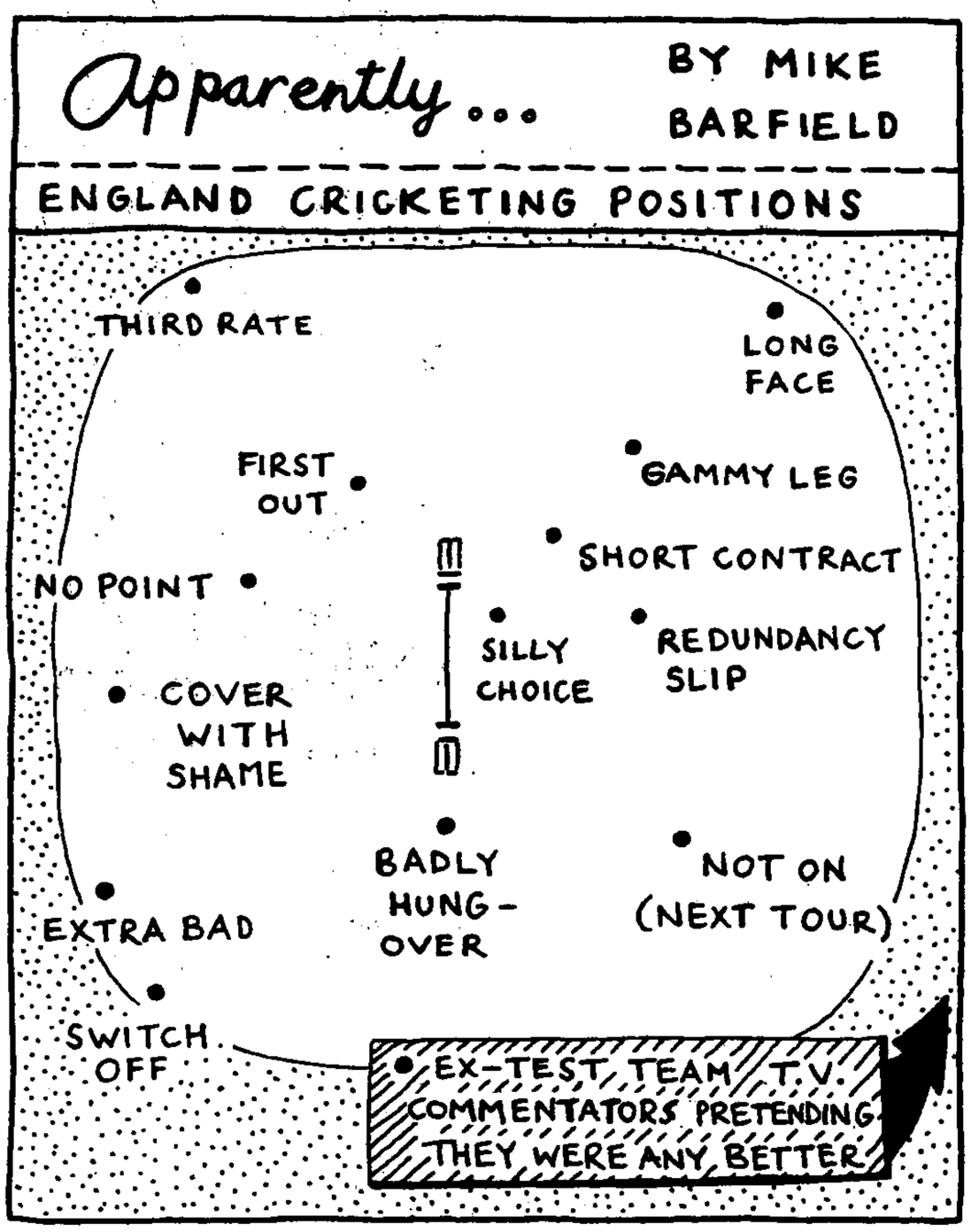
Virginia Bottomspanked

The Government could do nothing to stop the rebels who seemed to relish the attention of the whips. Said John Major: "We believe that being thrashed is a retrogressive step. It is deeply degrading for the individual and there is no evidence that it will lead to improved conduct. In fact, if we *were* to be beaten you might find a lot of ministers going into industry and behaving even more disgracefully."

Mr Wackford-Squeers is MP for Dotheboys Bottom.

ON OTHER PAGES

- Tory literature found in Soho sex shop — pornographer apologises for "crude rubbish" 2
- Taxpayer "not pleased" at being dragged into yacht row — close sources speak out 3
- Millions of interviews with John Cleese 4-94



The Daily Hurleygra

Friday, February 7, 1997

British Actress Has Picture Taken

by Our Entire Staff CHARLES COR, AUBERON WHOAR and SIR PEREGRINE PHWOARSTHORNE

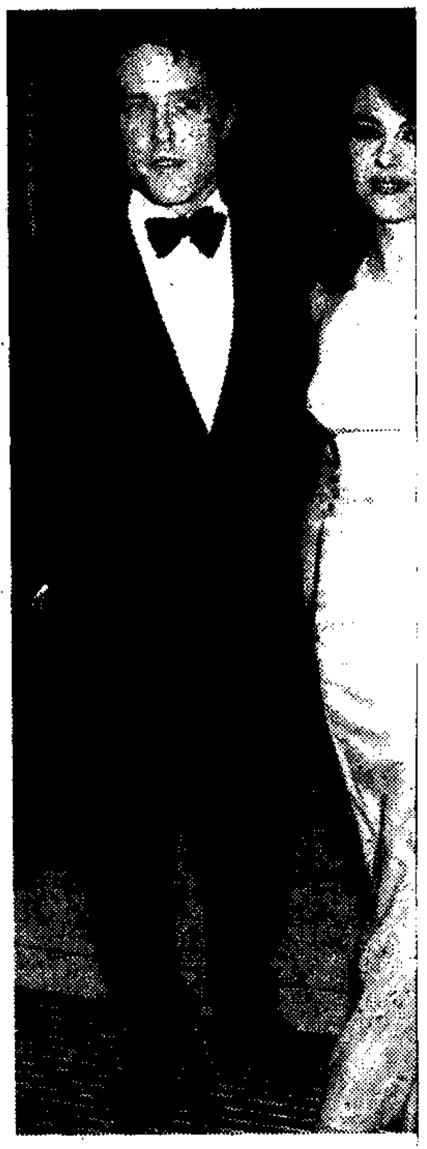
A TOP British actress, Miss Elizabeth Hurley, 23, wore a dress when she went out last night.

Our photograph shows her wearing the dress, which other newspapers have been reluctant to print on their front pages.

We have no such reservations. Cor! Look at her, lads! Blimey! Wouldn't you?

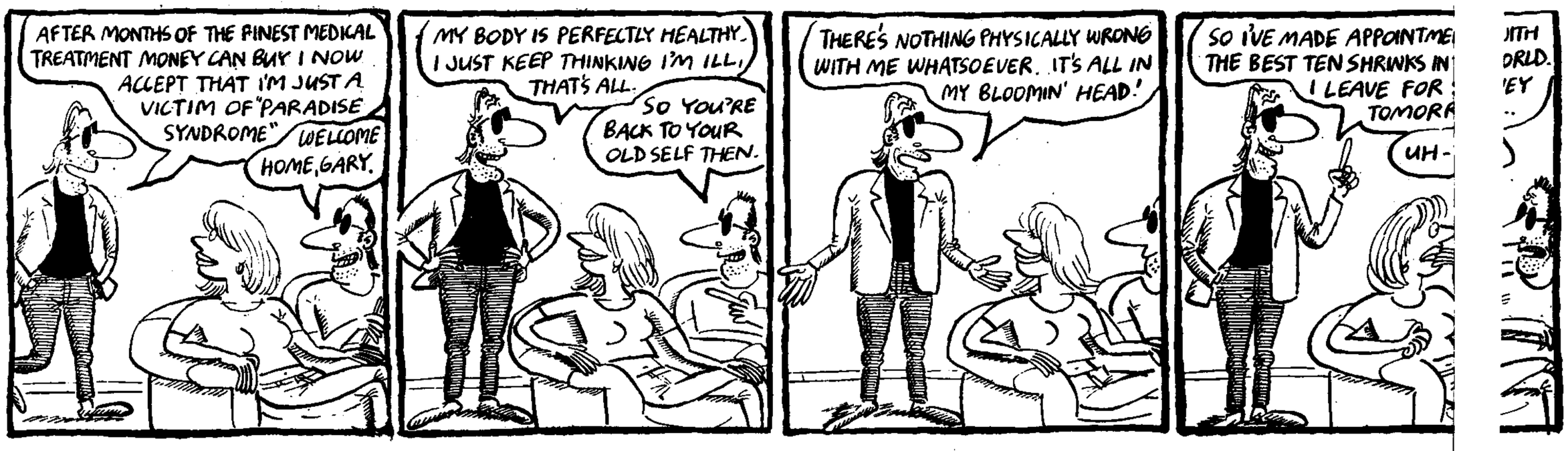
Get a load of that! Phwoar!

Leading Article: Page 17
Letters Page: 18
Comment by W.F. Deedesh: Page 19



Celeb

LI ER


AFTER MONTHS OF THE FINEST MEDICAL TREATMENT MONEY CAN BUY I NOW ACCEPT THAT I'M JUST A VICTIM OF "PARADISE SYNDROME"
WELCOME HOME, GARY.
MY BODY IS PERFECTLY HEALTHY. I JUST KEEP THINKING I'M ILL, THAT'S ALL.
SO YOU'RE BACK TO YOUR OLD SELF THEN.
THERE'S NOTHING PHYSICALLY WRONG WITH ME WHATSOEVER. IT'S ALL IN MY BLOOMIN' HEAD!
SO I'VE MADE APPOINTME
THE BEST TEN SHRINKS IN
I LEAVE FOR
TOMORR
UH-

Latest Mistress Hurley Engraving — Inside!

The Daily Tudorgraph

Out Of Court on Monday

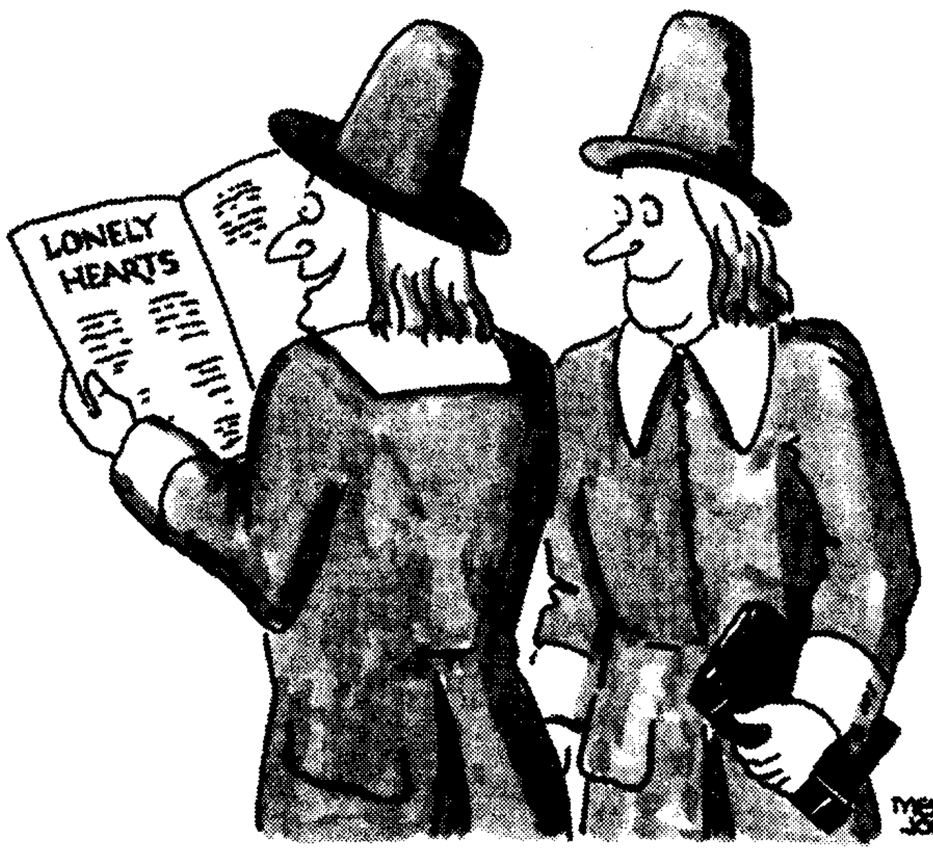
Ye Plans For Ye New Royal Shippe Hailed By All Ye Populace

by Our Politicking Staff
SIR CHARLES MOORE

HIS gracious Majesty King Henry Ye Eighth hath announced ye immediate building of a wondrous new craft for himself to be paid for by a grateful public.

"It shall be a symbol of ye nation's pride," he quoth, "and shall reflect ye standing of ye monarch as he shall sail around ye known world."

He continued to quoth: "Ye ship shall be named ye 'Mary Rose'." *(Continued 1594)*



"Listen to this! Surly, superstitious celibate, non-drinker, non-smoker, no sense of humour, seeks similar male"

New Films

Carla's Song

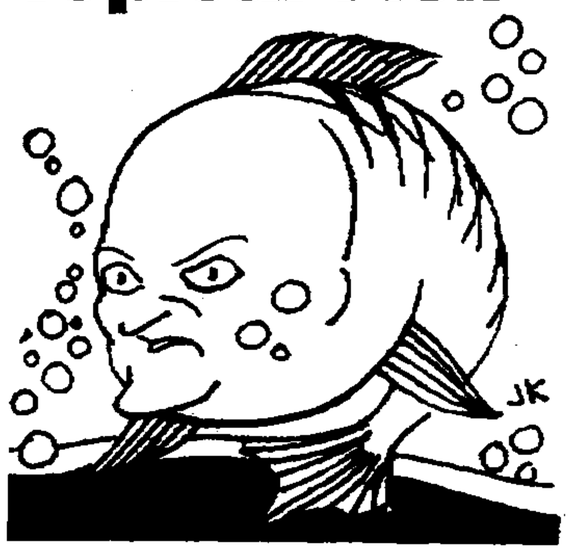
Directed by Ken Spart

ROMANTIC political drama about a sultry Italian temptress, Carla Powella (played by Sophia Loren) who joins the guerrilla movement Los Referendos in their heroic struggle to overthrow the hated dictatorship of the European Union. She falls in love with the leader of the revolutionaries, the charismatic El Marmito (played by Sir Anthony Hopkins), and follows him on his doomed quest to win supreme power. Deeply moving climax as he wins only three votes in Putney and she has to comfort him as he dies of embarrassment. Other highlights include the revolutionaries' council of war in their Mexican hideout, when El Marmito gets into a heated argument with his Greek-born chief of staff Taki and throws him into a tank of piranha fish.

Cast in Full

Carla Powella	CHERRY LUNGHI
El Marmito	BOB HOSKINS
Aspinale	DANNY DE VITO
Taki	TED DANSON
Man in TV Studio	DAVID FROST

Your Guide To Topical Fish*



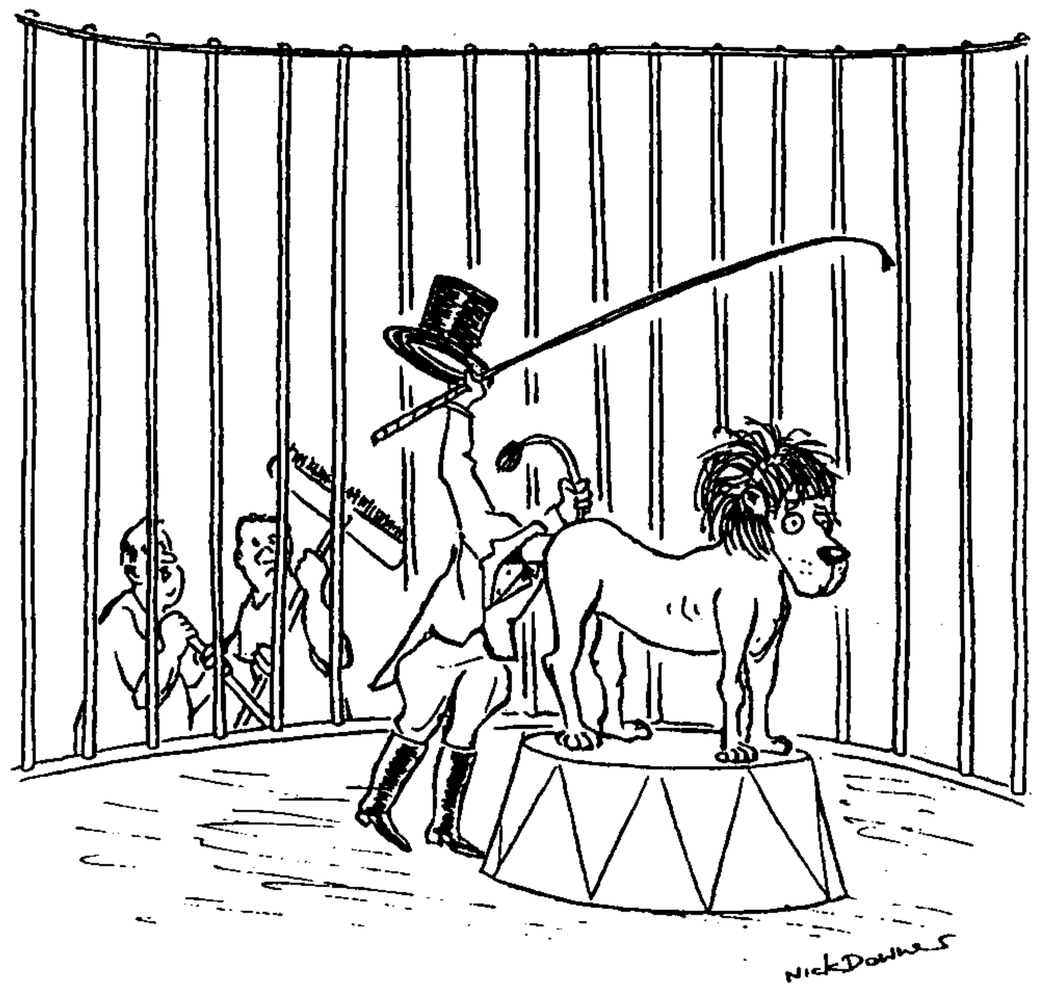
1. Guppy *(Darius Etoniensis Fraudulosis)*
DANGEROUS fish which benefits from incarceration away from other fish. If allowed free will poison environment. Thought to be extinct until recent reappearance.

2. Sir James Goldfish
(Marmitus Litigus Rex)
LARGE shark-like predator found on the Coast of Mexico. Tries to make other fish follow him out of the tank to their death.

3. Michael *(Legoverus Meteorologicus)*
HARMLESS-looking specimen with moustache and glasses but can prove slippery when it leaves its mate and swims off with bird.

4. Wanda
UNAMUSING fish which *(cont. p.94)*

**© P. Cook*



"He's always got to go one better than the other lion-tamers"

Exclusive To All Newspapers

MAN IN BRACES CHANGES JOB

by Our Media Staff **Phil Space**

A MAN in shirt sleeves and red braces is to give up his job and get another one, it was revealed today.

The news sent a shock wave through the whole of the newspaper industry, who immediately put the story on the front page.

No one knows why the man has left his job, nor what he is going to do next, nor does anyone care.

But speculation was rife last night over who might succeed the man in braces in doing whatever it is he has been doing for the last few years.

Insiders were predicting that his successor would be:

- a man with a beard
- a woman
- a man with glasses, or
- a woman with a beard.

All are highly experienced and supremely qualified to succeed the man with braces as he goes off to do something or other for even more money.

ON OTHER PAGES

- Tributes pour in to the man they call "The man in red braces".
- Two minutes' silence in TV studios as braces man bows out.
- Major declares national holiday to mark Red Braces Day.

DUL BOY PERSUADED TO APPEAR AGAIN

by Our Media Staff **Baz Bamigdelboye**

THE NATION's least favourite TV character, Dul Boy, has been enticed back into the public eye after widespread rumours that we had finally seen the last of him.

The star of the long running comedy "Only Fools and Whohe's" will be coaxed out of retirement for a 5 year long "Special" to be broadcast well into the next millennium.

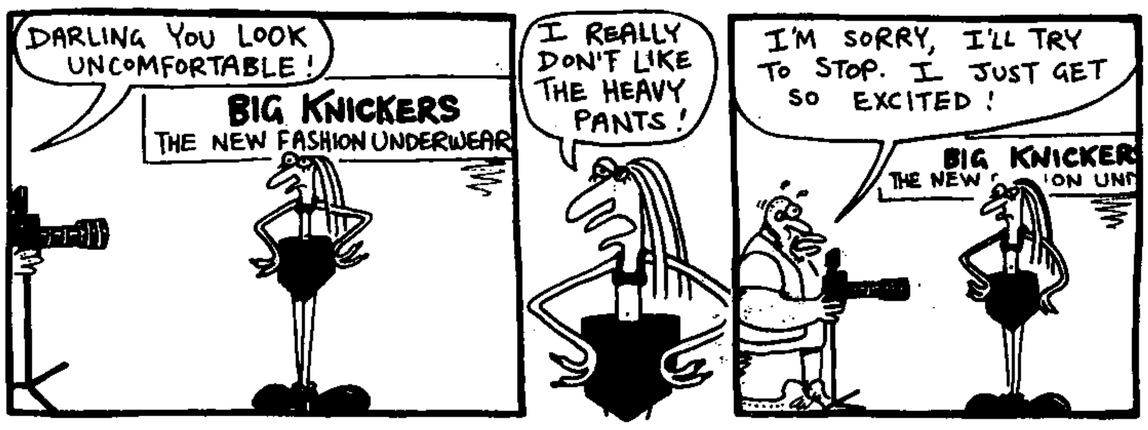
Says writer Brian Mawhinney: "There are plenty more hilarious storylines involving Dul Boy flogging the Underground to the Japanese or buying a Royal Yacht and trying to get everyone else to pay for it. Believe me, there are loads more laughs left in Dul Boy."

Critics, however, say that return of the disreputable Rotters would be a disaster and that the public have no desire to see any further episodes involving the low-lifers from Westminster. "He should quit while he's behind," says popular joke writer Pete Mandelson. "It's time for a new idea. The public want something younger, sillier and more fun. How about 'The Thin Blair Line'?" He continued: "It's a wonderful ensemble comedy that brings back memories of the classic 'Mag's Army'. You won't get better jokes than Jack Straw."

Dul Boy will not return on May 1st.

SUPERMODELS

KERBER


DARLING YOU LOOK UNCOMFORTABLE!
BIG KNICKERS
THE NEW FASHION UNDERWEAR
I REALLY DON'T LIKE THE HEAVY PANTS!
I'M SORRY, I'LL TRY TO STOP. I JUST GET SO EXCITED!
BIG KNICKERS

Hogarth's 300th Anniversary

HOGARTH's famous *Rake's Progress* (1997) is now on display in the House of Commons. *The Rake's Progress or Vice Rewarded* charts the rise and rise of one Alan Clarkwell in a series of narrative comic episodes. The sequence tells an instructive story about the perils of a life spent in drunkenness, philandering and politics. There aren't any.

In panel 3 (shown above) the high-living heir to a fortune Clarkwell seduces the wife *and* both daughters of a well-known judge which inevitably leads to no downfall at all. The Rake instead proceeds to make another fortune writing up his debauchery in his diaries. His subsequent appearance in the dock over arms sales does not dent his career either and in the last touching scene Clarkwell descends into madness and is consigned to Bedlam (the name given by 20th Century Londoners to the House of Commons). He then continues just as before.

POETRY CORNER

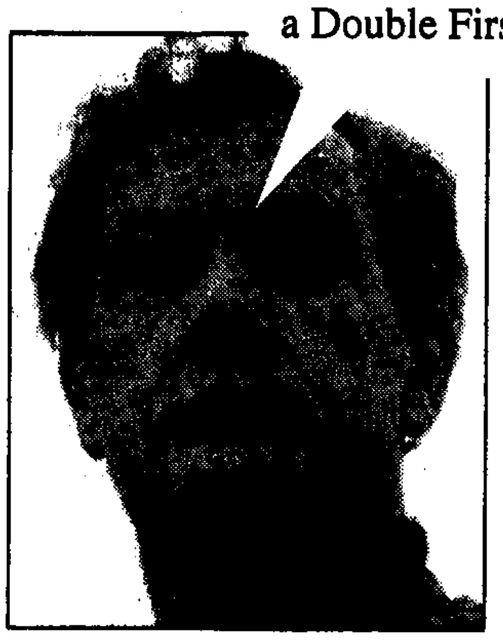
In Memoriam: Lines written on the departure from Oxford University of Professor Norman Stone for the Mehmet Thatcher Historical Institute, Ankara

Sho. Farewell then
Professor Shtone.
You have been
Shacked.

Thish callsh for
A drink.
Ash you would
Shay.

E.J. Thribb (aged 17½)

Make mine a Double First

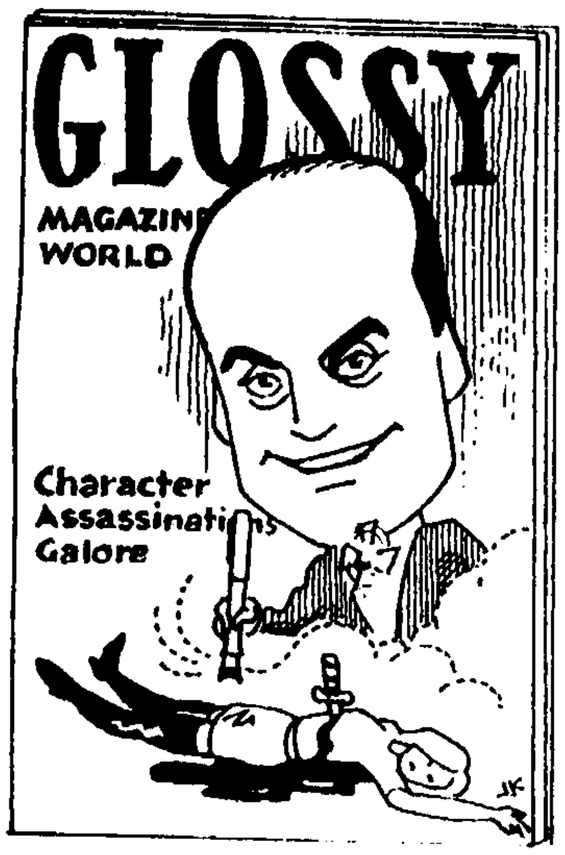


Clark played up like a trooper, sitting meekly like a boy caught scrumping... until a particularly lovely blonde Tory joined in. As she grew ever sterner, a wolfish smile played on Clark's lips, and his eyes flashed with amusement. All this, only three days after selection — can he keep it up for five years?

Daily Telegraph

Literary Review

The World of Inferiors



With Friends Like These
Nicholas Coleridge
(Orion, £16.99)

IF you were looking for a real exposé of a business, who would be most likely to deliver the goods? The man still in charge, do you think? No?

Nicholas Coleridge is managing director of Condé Nast magazines in this country: that is, *Vogue*, *House and Garden*, *Tatler*, *Interiors*, *GQ* and so on. Previously, he was editor of *Harpers & Queen*. Plainly, it's a world he relishes, a world which suits him as perfectly as a bowl suits a goldfish.

Yet here is an attempted best-seller, portraying the world of glossy magazines as a snake-pit. Coleridge hauls the reader through 370 pages with a blurry murder mystery. A young woman journalist is strangled. The nice-guy managing director of the magazine group sets out to find the killer. Laboriously, three different suspects — two business tycoons she has written about, the bitchy editor of the rag she's on — are suspected one after the other, until at the end the real perpetrator is suddenly revealed.

But this feeble plot is just a pretext for showing off the setting. As a journalist, Coleridge's speciality is the piece generalising confidently from what's going on in his immediate social milieu: villa parties in Tuscany, weekending in the country, yuppie profligacy, and so forth. In this novel, he's done the same again, turning this time simply to his own workplace for a subject.

Grotesquely, several journalists have responded with excited yelps of recognition. In the *Spectator*, Christa D'Souza, a contributing editor at *Vogue*, has pointed out that the hero, "Kit Preston", is Coleridge himself, and "I am Anna, the brilliant and talented journalist who also happens to be extremely good at roller-blading". So, she concludes with pleasure, she's " 'the direct and energetic lover' to whom Nicholas (I mean Kit) gives it a couple of times on the sofa until both of us (I mean them) are 'too fucked out' to do it anymore." Reader identification can hardly go any further.

There is no limit, Coleridge understands, to the narcissism of those who want to be in glossy magazines. As long as they can see their own faces reflected back, nothing else matters. So far from being a portrait of a social world that would exist anyway, glossy magazines create the phenomenon they describe. Their reports are self-fulfilling. *With Friends Like These* is merely one step further in self-admiration, a mirror of a mirror.

Coleridge is just the latest to cash in on the peculiar glamour that people still attribute to fiction, however paltry or rudimentary. The people he bases his characters on — himself, the editor Meredith Etherington-Smith, the photographer Steven Meisel — are all highly publicised individuals anyway, yet for some reason their lightly disguised incorporation into fiction is treated as significant. Similarly, Coleridge has only to call *Vogue* "Couture", *GQ* "Man Alive" and *Tatler* "In Society" to diddle some poor saps into thinking that they are in the know.

With Friends Like These is more smoothly written than most beach books, with, as you might suppose, sharper than usual observation of the ways of the rich, but great tracts of it are taken up by tedious descriptions of the magazine business with only a token relation to the story. Coleridge bores on about advertising sales presentations, awards dinners, his method of assessing a magazine's performance: "I spent an hour comparing and contrasting *Smart Living* with *Genteel Living*. Which one had produced the better supplement on bathrooms?"

Such things he knows all too much about. His attempts to imagine life outside the glossy magazines are, however, tragically inept. He seems to find it actually inconceivable that there can be people who simply do not care about them. Sitting outside a Thameside pub, "Kit Preston" does his best to imagine such deprivation. "Some people live their whole lives like this. I know about it from market research. They spend their summer evenings sitting in deckchairs in English gardens, counting their blessings and reading *Smart Living*. That's what the marketing people tell me, anyway. It never sounds very plausible. Except when I'm here." It's an inadvertently revealing phrase. "Except when I'm here." The goldfish in his bowl probably doesn't believe in anything beyond the glass either.

Books & Bookmen

☐ JOHN Holloran and the Reed Elsevier heavies were, at the beginning of last week, within days of completing a deal to sell Reed Books, the trade division, to Random House, which is clearly more in need of product than anyone thought.

Random House was keen to acquire for its paperback imprints the Reed backlist which includes such authors as Somerset Maugham, Steinbeck, Georgette Heyer, Thomas Mann, Kafka, George Orwell, Graham Green, Sue Townsend, Leslie Thomas and Roddy Doyle. Fashionable editors Tom Weldon and Louise Moore were being sold as part of the package.

The strategy collapsed when Weldon and Moore announced to Holloran that they were off to join their old boss, head prefect Helen Fraser, at Penguin. So distraught was Reed that Weldon was offered £150,000 to stay, Moore £125,000. But off to the Penguin pool they are going, and no doubt many of their favourite authors will follow.

It is unlikely that many other staff at the sold lists will be wooed with such desperation. Indeed, industry insiders have set a "spread" on the number of Reed staffers whom RH will keep once the process of "due diligence" has taken place: the quote is a depressing 10-12. The lesser price that Random has agreed to pay Reed for what is left of a once great group of publishing companies is thought to be £15m — a knockdown bargain.

Meanwhile over at Penguin, Clare "The Queen" Alexander flounced out having played her cards rather badly. She immediately resigned when told that head prefect Helen Fraser had got the top job she, The Queen, had aspired to. A few days later she had second thoughts — Penguin, after all, is Penguin — but Fraser had decided she didn't want her.

"I don't know, Roger, you've put me in an awkward position"

All this may be put down to the curse of Amanda Craig who decided, after the Queen let her novel *A Vicious Circle* go, that the Queen would have to find another kingdom. Life can't have been much fun at the Queen's house in recent weeks as HarperCollins has declined to commission the next novel of William Gill, the Queen's consort.

Alexander is likely to pop up this week or next at Macmillan, but surely not in Peter "Eeyore" Straus's old job, which the increasingly dispirited Jon Riley covets. And Riley would find it depressing to have his old boss at Penguin, the Queen herself, bossing him about again.

Back at the Penguin pool, Susan Watt at Michael Joseph has been moved sideways and given a silly new title to allow the ambitious Weldon to run the imprint, but no one has yet been persuaded to grasp the nettle of poor undernourished Hamish Hamilton.

■ IF THE byline Peter Risdon was unfamiliar to readers of *The Express on Sunday*'s book pages two weekends ago, wonder no more: he reviewed Darius Guppy's dazzling masterpiece *Roll the Dice*, and was in fact The Third Man in the Guppy scam.

"I played the part of a 'gunman' in their Manhattan hotel room," confides the delightful Risdon. "But then a month later, when Guppy bragged to me about having pulled off 'the perfect crime', I did a lot of soul-searching, reached some unflattering conclusions about myself and decided to turn Guppy into the police."

Clearly, this touching fit of conscience had nothing at all to do with the fact that at the time of his confession, some 12 months later, the future *Express on Sunday* reviewer had just been arrested for attempting to commit a £½m fraud of his own. It would seem the event was so lacking in significance, anyhow, that Risdon neglects utterly to mention it.

'Bookworm'

REMAINDERS OF THE DAY

THE BOOK: *ANDREW NEIL: Full Disclosure.*

THE HYPE: Full disclosure.

LAST SEEN: Fully discounted at Waterstone's, Winchester, where 30 copies were at "half the previous lowest price indicated" — ie at less than £2.50.

footnotes

WHEN THE SAINTS GO CASHING IN

THREE MEN IN A FLOAT: Ian Gordon, Guy Askham, Brian Hunt
RIGHT: F.A. chief Keith Wiseman

FOOTBALL fans worried about the flotation of their club on the stock exchange can take comfort from what has happened at Southampton.

For some time now, Southampton FC has been run by five directors: two accountants (Guy Askham and Mike Richards) who worked for many years for Burnett Swayne; a solicitor (Ian Gordon); a coroner who is also chairman of the Football Association (Keith Wiseman); and a builder (Brian Hunt).

All are devoted fans of the club. Their firms muck in, too: from 1993-96, for instance, they took £168,840 from the football club for legal, accounting and building "services". But the directors themselves never made big money. Their shares were valued at £1 each, and it was a strict rule that shares could not be sold at a profit.

Their little parcel of shares was built up over 13 years. In 1984 there was a small share issue which wasn't very successful. Some 12,000 shares weren't taken up. In 1987 and 1988, the directors decided to sell most of these unallocated shares to themselves. Wiseman got 2,000, Hunt 2,000 and Gordon got 2,000. Over several years, a company called Westwood, whose registered offices are at Burnett Swayne, bought up football club shares from the public at £1. In 1990, Mike Richards of Burnett Swayne joined the board of Southhampton FC, so Burnett Swayne had to give up auditing the club's accounts. Soon afterwards, Westwood sold 2,000 of the unallocated shares to Mike Richards. In September last year, Westwood generously allocated another 150 shares each to all five directors — and another two accountants from, er, Burnett Swayne. The investment by the directors was minimal. Askham's shares cost £3,500 and the holdings of the other four cost £2,650 each.

The flotation took the form of a reverse takeover by a Bristol company specialising in old people's homes, appropriately called Secure Retirement. Without investing another penny, the five football club directors were given 320 shares for every one they previously owned. The share price soared. Askham's jumped in value from £3,500 to £1.5m. The others' £2,650 stake was suddenly and miraculously worth well over £1m. Messrs Askham, who no longer works for Burnett Swayne, though his office is in the same building, and Richards, who left Burnett Swayne in December, told the local paper, the *Southern Evening Echo*, on 14 January that they won't sell any club shares for at least two years.

The Southampton players are the same. The stadium is the same, though it is being moved soon to allow The Dell to be developed at a fat profit by Secure Retirement plc. The basic assets of the club are the same. The manager is the same. The crowds are the same. Matt Le Tissier is the same. The club's precarious position in the Premier division is the same. So what's the difference? Simple. The directors are 450 times richer.

HAIL, FELLOW, WELL BRED

■ **THE Hellenic Foundation, which is mainly sponsored by Greek shipowners in London, takes a keen interest in promoting the image of their country in British academic life, and was delighted to be invited to sponsor a £25,000 visiting fellowship in Hellenic studies at Brasenose College, Oxford.**

The first advertisements for the fellowship went out last year, and a selection committee was set up by the college. It consisted of two nominees from the Hellenic Foundation and two from the college, including the chairman of the selection committee, the distinguished Brasenose economist Anthony Courakis.

It was very embarrassing for Mr Courakis when he discovered that the name of a leading contender for the fellowship this year was that of distinguished criminologist Professor Nestor Courakis, his cherished cousin.

Whoops! As the college told the *Eye*, Mr Courakis "declared his decision to abstain completely from the selection and election" of the fellowship for which his relative had applied, leaving the committee dominated by representatives of the shipowners.

After much careful deliberation, the reduced committee announced the name of the successful candidate: Professor Courakis. The professor spent a few agreeable weeks as a guest of the college last term and some time next summer will be holding a seminar.

HCI: Huge Cuts Imminent

■ **MORE trouble at HCI, the luxury private hospital built in Glasgow with the help of £48m in public money.**

HCI went into receivership a few weeks after opening in 1994, and was rescued by rich investors from Abu Dhabi. At least £10m of public money went straight down the drain. The huge 250-bed hospital rarely has more than 20 patients, who are almost always outnumbered by "organisation development" and "human resources" bureaucrats.

A string of top people have jumped ship, including HCI's high-flying marketing director Doug Trigg; three top surgeons, Larry Hollier, who was also chief of staff, Mike Veidenheimer and Horst Zinke; and David Durack, an infectious diseases specialist. Recent talks in Abu Dhabi came to gloomy conclusions, and hospital staff are nervously anticipating still more retrenchment and redundancies.

Ministers are hoping that the announcement of further cuts will be delayed until the general election. Further bad news from HCI might cast aspersions on the three ministers responsible for this reckless public spending on rich people who do not pay taxes in Britain. All three have nurtured a reputation for what their heroine Margaret Thatcher used to call "good husbandry of public funds". Since the HCI scandal, all three have been promoted. They are Malcolm Rifkind, foreign secretary; Ian Lang, president of the board of trade; and Michael Forsyth, secretary of state for Scotland.

That's enough EDS

■ **ALAN LANGLANDS, chief executive of the national health service, hates nothing more than a visit to the House of Commons public accounts committee (PAC) to discuss the interminable cock-ups and wastes of NHS money on computer companies (see last *Eye*).**

He was there again on 20 January to try to explain another scandal: the virtual give-away of the entire computer system of the recently-abolished South & West regional health authority. In the best traditions of free enterprise competition, there was only one bidder for the system: the celebrated US firm of EDS (see *Eyes passim ad nauseam*). EDS got its prize for less than half what the national audit office (NAO) reckoned it was worth: at a loss to the poor old NHS of at least £4m.

Mr Langlands also had to admit that the NHS had not bothered to get a "benchmark" valuation for the system before flogging it off. He was defended by an accounting officer for the treasury who surprised the committee by asserting that the treasury did not insist on benchmark valuations in the sale of public assets.

The committee used a convenient break to order copies of the treasury's own guidelines, *Trade Sales Including Management Buy-Outs*, published last July. Para 25.4 says: "The vendor should obtain an accurate and up-to-date benchmark valuation for the business to be sold."

How much cock could a Woodcock talk if a Woodcock could talk cock?

SIR JOHN WOODCOCK

HOW could the six prisoners who were found outside Whitemoor prison on 9 September 1994 plead not guilty to breaking out of it? The answer is that there are two common law offences *for prison escapees*. The first is simply escaping from prison. The second, much more serious, is breaking out. The six were charged with breaking out, which they denied.

That first trial last autumn was stopped because of press references to the prisoners' connections to the IRA. The new one opened on 13 January. Most of the first week of the trial was taken up with submissions and the evidence of the governor of the prison, Brodie Clarke.

Clarke at first denied that there were prison notebooks which recorded the movements of category A prisoners every 15 minutes. Then he admitted that there were such books, but that they had been lost. So the movements of the prisoners before and during their escape could not be proved.

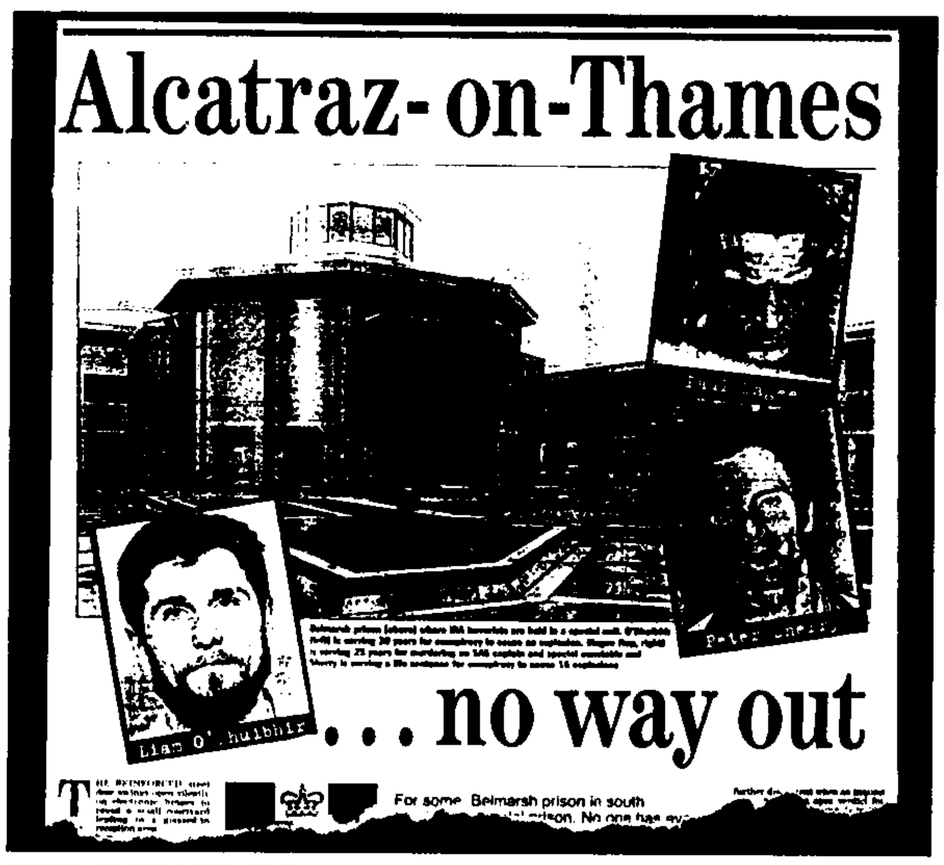
On **20 January** the trial moved on to the crucial issue of the hole in the outer perimeter fence. The 1994 report on the escape by former police chief Sir John Woodcock said the prisoners "cut a hole in the fence and forcefully bent back the resultant flap... this action set off the fence alarm".

The evidence in court suggested otherwise. When the timings were minutely examined, it was hard to see how the men had time to cut their way through the 70 strands of steel in the fence with a pair of bolt-croppers. Further evidence which cast doubt on the official story came from the five prison officers who were on duty that night in the emergency control room at the prison. All five said the fence alarm went off at 8.09, activating closed circuit cameras.

They should have recorded what appeared on their screens. Only one tape of such a recording reached the defence. That tape started at 8.13, four vital minutes after the alarm went off. What happened to the missing four minutes — or to the other three tapes which the officers said they made that evening?

The man in charge of the control room, Barry Comer, aged 49, gave evidence on **20 January**. When the alarm sounded in the control room, he said, he saw no one at the fence. On **21 January** the second officer in the control room, Marcia Whitehurst, 37, said she had seen a figure close to the wall, not the fence.

She was followed later that day by Neil Pearson, who, though only 28, seemed far more experienced in the technology than his colleagues. He remembered a loud bang when the alarm went off and the whole of the alarm panel lit up. On his screen he saw men running back from the fence towards the prison wall.



Alcatraz-on-Thames

... no way out

WHO SUPPLIED THE NAMES?: *Evening Standard 22 Jan, page 25*

Mr Pearson shook the court by revealing something he'd never said before — because, he said, he hadn't been asked. He insisted that as soon as the cameras were activated, he had started to record what they showed. He was adamant that he could not possibly have missed four minutes of this recording. He said he did not know what happened to the tape he'd recorded. Pearson's sensational evidence lasted well into **22 January**. He was followed into the witness box by his less experienced colleague Ceri Morgan. Morgan could not remember when he'd started recording.

By that evening, **Wednesday 22 January**, the jury were plainly puzzled. They had started to ask the judge questions about the hole in the fence. Was it possible that someone else, not the six men, had cut it; and if so what would happen to the "breaking out" charge? The prosecution barrister David Waters QC was also worried. He warned that he might have to add an extra charge of ordinary escape. If the six men had been found guilty of escape but not guilty of breaking out, the inescapable conclusion would have been that, in the jury's view, someone else had cut the fence.

The trial was on a knife edge. On their way home on the evening of **22 January**, defence lawyers bought the London *Evening Standard*. It contained a feature article about Belmarsh prison in south London, entitled Alcatraz-on-Thames. The article was written by Mark Honigsbaum, who the previous weekend had visited a remand prisoner called Fraser at Belmarsh. He wrote the piece on **20 January** and submitted it on **21 January**.

Staff on the *Evening Standard* features desk wanted a lurid illustration for their lurid headline. They looked for pictures of violent men held at Belmarsh. The prison service press office was asked for some appropriate names and (as was categorically confirmed to the *Eye*) refused to give any. Somehow, from the frantic research in the *Standard* offices, the pictures of three IRA convicts emerged and were plastered all over the top of the article, together with details of their crimes and sentences.

The three were irrelevant to the article. Only one of them was (very briefly) mentioned in it. They were not permanently stationed at Belmarsh. They had been brought there from secure prisons in the north because they were standing trial at Woolwich in the Whitemoor case. Peter Sherry, for instance, had gone to Belmarsh only a few days before the trial started.

The contempt of court was blatant. The judge stopped the case at once and threw it out. The mystery of who cut the fence was not solved. Sir John Woodcock wrote to the *Times* that "the outer fence was alarmed but at the time the sensitivity had been turned down to avoid being triggered by birds and small animals". This revelation was not even mentioned in the Woodcock report. To the profound relief of the authorities, and thanks to the *Standard*, the intriguing questions about this affair — did the six have accomplices, and, if so, who were they? — may never again be asked, let alone answered.

GONG OF ROWLAND

■ THE patronage secretary at 10 Downing Street and even the queen have been surprised by angry letters protesting at the new year knighthood for Sir David Rowland, chairman of Lloyd's of London.

Old Etonian Hampshire farmer Sir William Jaffray demanded that Rowland's knighthood "should be put on hold forthwith and the investigation into Lloyd's affairs as promised by the government must be implemented." Sir William predicts: "This course of action will not happen so long as we have a government which, in its short term view, believes it is better to support the Lloyd's institution, however rotten it might be, in pursuit of the illusion of fiscal gain".

Sir William and many others like him point to the role of David Rowland as chairman of Matthews Wrightson underwriters in the early 1980s. Minutes of the company in 1981 suggest that the directors knew in advance of horrendous losses, especially on pollution and asbestos claims, which were looming over Lloyd's; but failed to issue any general warning about them.

Others point to the leap in the recruitment rate of "names" at Lloyd's after a small clique of top people there became aware of the likely losses. These new recruits, many of them in the United States and Canada, are still not prepared to take their subsequent losses lying down, and are extravagantly seeking revenge in the courts. There are several outstanding legal actions in the United States — many of which name and blame Sir David.

SIR DAVID ROWLAND

You can write to Paul Foot at 6 Carlisle Street, London W1V 5RG, or leave a message for him on 0171 287 3183

In the City

WHILE observers have been hypnotised by Nicola Horlick and her every day tale of City greed, more interesting information has emerged about the much more serious and costly (to Morgan Grenfell and its clients) sins of its other disgraced fund manager, Peter Young.

Brokers Fiba Nordic Securities are in the frame for many of the bizarre investments made by "Polaroid" — investments such as Solv-Ex, the latter day philosopher's stone when it comes to tar sands. And Fiba's corporate finance director Erik Langaker was Young's man on the Solv-Ex and other way-out deals. So much so that since the Young bomb went off, Langaker has stepped down to become a Fiba consultant.

But well before Solv-Ex, Langaker and Fiba had cemented the Young connection by introducing him to the buzzing Oslo stock market which tripled in three years. And Langaker was ideally placed to ensure Young and his clients were constantly supplied with hot stocks because he and his fellow Norwegian chums were big hitters in the small Oslo market.

In particular Langaker was close to two of the most influential players: Tor-Aksel Voldberg and Jan Andersen, who were in and out of some of the best performers before the balloon burst last year. Not surprisingly Young and Morgan Grenfell often found themselves buying into stocks which had been very generous to the two speculators, sorry professional investors — a useful aid to keeping the price moving ever higher. Industrinvestor and Sysdeco were two hot stocks now somewhat cooler into which Young followed Voldberg, Andersen and Langaker. Norway, with Sweden, represented more than a third of the portfolio of the £800 million European Growth Trust.

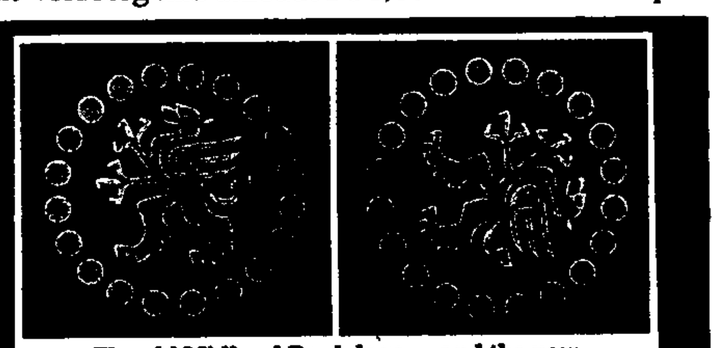
However, the Norwegian authorities are now not only probing the Fiba/Young connection, they are also investigating an alleged case of insider dealing involving Langaker and Voldberg in a company heavily favoured by Young. More than £5.5 million of Morgan Grenfell money went into the Norwegian company Hitec. By the end of May last year, the investment by EGT was worth £9.7 million. Further shares were also acquired by Young's smaller European Capital Growth Fund which chipped in another £1 million-plus.

However, it all started to go wrong last June when Hitec issued a profit warning. The shares fell by a third in one day. The warning followed a Hitec board meeting and subsequent discussions with Langaker, who advised the company from his London office. But before that warning reached the Oslo stock exchange three days later, Langaker's ace client Voldberg had unloaded 50,000 shares at the top of the market. Needless to say this did not go down too well with the Norwegian regulators. So much so that they have handed the matter over to Okokrim, the Norwegian financial crime investigators.

Voldberg denies any insider dealing, or being given privileged information about Hitec's profits, saying he placed a sell order with Langaker weeks before which was triggered by the price that day. Langaker too denies any wrongdoing. Sadly any conversations between Langaker in London and his Oslo clients were not taped because he was in corporate finance, not dealing!

Doubtless Langaker and Voldberg will be vindicated by the inquiry. However, the role of Fiba in the Morgan Grenfell scandal may be less easy to explain. Especially as it was Fiba which introduced Young to the services of Zurich lawyers Wolf & Wyler, guardians of the Luxembourg labyrinth of letter box companies which hid the true nature of almost £200 million of "Polaroid" deals. Deals which generated some £3 million in fees split between Fiba and unknown third parties.

Wolf & Wyler also helped hide the beneficial owners of Fiba itself. The brokers are owned by an anonymous Luxembourg brass plate which rejoices in the name of YME Holdings. The ultimate owners of YME are naturally hidden behind a local nominee. Just the sort of arrangement Peter Young came to know and love.



The old Midland Bank logo...and the new

Daily Telegraph

A FUND manager who shared Peter Young's yen for unusual investments was Stephen Bamford, who until last year ran GFM International Investors.

GFM is an affiliate of the New York insurance giant Metropolitan Life. Bamford, like Young, liked Canadian-listed Russian plays such as Emtech, Xavier and Princess Resources. Like Young, too, he seems to have met and liked the men behind these good things. So much so that he is now running Isleinvest, one more Young pick which also found the attractions of Solv-Ex irresistible.

But Met Life were clearly more relaxed than Morgan Grenfell about their fund manager's personal dealings. For in the case of Princess, Bamford bought in well ahead of the fund and at half the price. During 1994 Bamford took part in a private placing of Princess shares at C$0.25. He took 100,000 in his own name. A year later GFM bought 1.9 million shares at C$0.50. Nothing wrong with that, right?

HAMBROS' involvement with the world of corporate gumshoes appears to be in disarray. The bankers failed to sell Network Security and bodyguard specialists DSL as a package last year (because the price was too rich, say insiders).

The disaffected DSL management promptly organised a buy-out. Soon afterwards, it appears, Hambros fell out big time with Network's founder Mike Comer. As a result he is spending six months at home on "gardening leave". Morale at Network is now said to be low and the profit prospects may make any sale more rather than less difficult.

THE cull of suits at NatWest Markets following the arrival of George Magan and his team is expected to be far reaching. Those close to Magan are suggesting that as many as 40 executives could soon find themselves downsized.

"Phase One of our strategy — getting out of the frying pan — was an unqualified success"

SQUEAKY clean but aggressively expansionist Cable & Wireless is said to be considering a possible indirect move into the sleazy world of phone porn — a route already pioneered by equally fastidious British Telecom.

The word is that the Mercury telecom group could be listening to proposals to utilise the remote British dependency of Diego Garcia as a way station for international dial-a-porn calls as well as American B-52 bombers.

C&W recently installed a two-way international telephone service on the remote Indian Ocean island, essentially for US military personnel. However, the phone porn peddlars are always looking for impoverished islands with a need for cash and telephone numbers for hire. BT fields sex calls supposedly destined for Sierra Leone in London. (Heavy breathers pay to dial faraway, expensive places but the sex tapes or girls are usually somewhere else, and that is where calls are diverted.) So, if it goes ahead, C&W would be likely to route calls to Diego Garcia numbers here rather than to one of the last dots of red on the map. Doubtless any such deal will come with HMG approval?

DESPERATE to improve its image as synonymous with fraud and corruption, Nigeria has adopted a remarkable ploy to persuade sceptical governments that its military rulers and their cronies are not part of the problem.

Faced with the worldwide epidemic of letter frauds (inviting greedy and gullible strangers to open their bank accounts to receive promised multi-million payments from corrupt officials in return for some up front expenses) Nigeria has decided to blame the victims! It is their fault for agreeing to become co-conspirators in what is obviously a criminal plot to rob the Nigerian state.

That is the message recently relayed to British officials in Whitehall by a high ranking messenger from the military dictator General Abacha. Oh, and the Nigerian regime, just like "new" Labour, is being tough on fraud and the causes of fraud. But then if they don't know who is doing it, who does? Of course, not too many letter fraudsters have been jailed in Lagos. Needless to say Whitehall was not impressed and Scotland Yard continues to prosecute and extradite those who run the scams for the Lagos untouchables.

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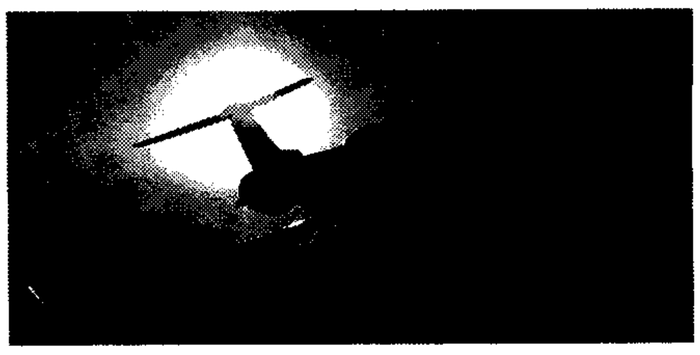

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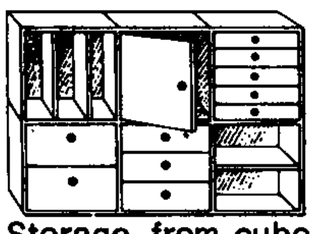

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Private Eye's tribute to WILLIE RUSHTON

An Eye 'Special' will be on sale at the end of February. More details in the next issue.

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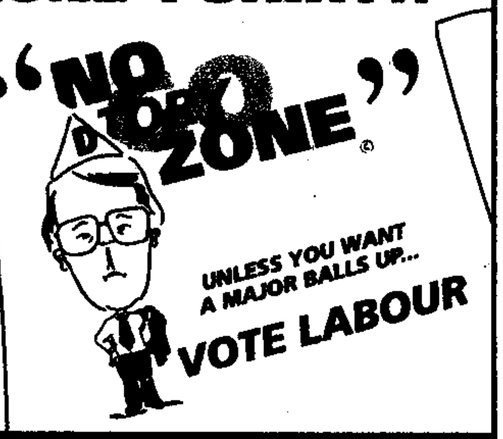

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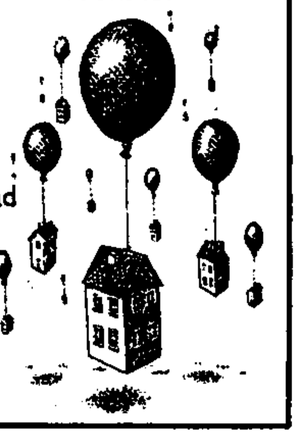

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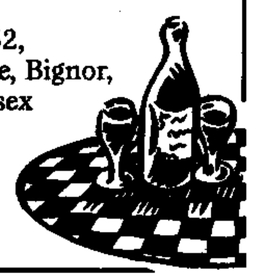

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EYE NEED

TALENTED FILM STUDENT needs £2,000 for an excellent opportunity. Call: 0181 863 8331.

YEAR 2000 COMPUTER date change project requires £500k — serious investors only. Contact GEORGE on 0973 291373.

CLINICALLY DEPRESSED but determined, desperately needs £9,000 to complete MA. LLOYDS 0219928, 30-94-43. Please help me.

DAMSEL IN DISTRESS — £23,000 urgently required for genuine, unselfish cause. All donations/help/ideas gratefully received. Box 0617.

HOPELESS, DISTRESSED lady needs £3,000 to clear debt. NATWEST 51-50-14, 80990363.

DISTRAUGHT VICTIM of domestic violence genuinely requires help for herself and child. Cannot sell property — desperate. Box 0717.

CHARITY FILM PROJECT seeks sponsor. Contact PINEARROW LTD. Box 0817.

PLEASE HELP — £12,000 desperately needed to stop re-po men. Willing to long repay/help in return. Thank you. Box 0917.

£20,000 NEEDED to kickstart export of quality Spanish brandy and wine to Far East. Excellent returns plus FREE wine and brandy for life. Box 0217.

PC FAX FOR fledgling business. Cash welcome. BARCLAYS 70743852, Sort 20-43-04. Nice one. Box 0317.

A DIFFERENT SPACE for families and children. Financial help wanted for purchase of alternative centre. HELENA 0181 429 0336.

QUALIFIED COMPLEMENTARY therapist urgently requires funds to establish healing centre. NATWEST 60-05-16, 81768087. Thanks.

FLYING INSTRUCTOR sold her soul to fly, needs £5,000 to fulfil commercial dream. LLOYDS 0553930/30-16-11. Many tanx.

ACCOUNTANT DYSLEXIC after accident, need £12,000 repay studentloan. Please help. NATWEST 608007, 54171873.

YOUNG ARTIST, too much bad luck. Must get back to Blighty. Need £900. Artwork in return. Box 3217.

SERIOUS INVESTOR required — new leisure/sport/retail project. Tyneside. Solid proposal. 60K capital costs + 1st year cashflow support. No fishermen! Fax interest 01434-682475.

SINGLE MOM — working full-time. 6 yr old son ill, needs constant attention (longterm). £25,000 to be able to stay home with him. Thank you. COOP BANK 089001, A/c 13043232.

CARING WOMAN genuinely desperate for financial help. 07-01-16, 04951194. Immensely grateful.

KEEPING OTHERS AFLOAT has left me sinking in £10,000 debt — any help would be gratefully received. TSB 77 7417, 27509368.

£4760 TO TURN despair into hope. Box 2917.

£3,500 URGENTLY NEEDED to get back on my feet after long illness. Please help! Box 3017.

£3821.00 NEGATIVE EQUITY left to pay. Please help. 07-01-16, 16521411.

MALE GRADUATE NEEDS donations for life saving cosmetic surgery. Any terms. Please. NATWEST 60-14-18, 59331909. Box 3117.

DESPERATE POST-GRAD seeks financial aid — LLOYDS 0270363, Sort 30-97-08.

CHARITY FUNDRAISER — raises more than £300,000 pa — Normality, little Anna, home disappearing through enforced divorce. I face bankruptcy — if so, can't function as fundraiser. Please can you help? Box 4417.

BENEFACTORS SOUGHT by bright woman fighting against the odds — if you would like to redress the balance, it would be appreciated. ABBEY NATIONAL Number 2040055701, Sort Code 090126 or Box 4917 for more information.

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EYE LOVE

STYLISH, WITTY, WARM and pretty woman, lecturer (humanist) wltm single male graduate, 40s, London. Box 1217.

HANDSOME AFFLUENT married airline pilot seeks naughty lady for champagne affair — photo/phone appreciated. Box 1317.

SLIM, GENTLE, 41 male seeks attractive, easy going woman for occasional pub dining exhibitions conversation. London. Box 1417.

COME HERE OFTEN? Humorous kind male, 33, seeks Somerset female for walks, cinema. Box 1617.

OFFBEAT MANAGING director seeks bright girlfriend to mix business with pleasure. 0171 792 8825 or Box 3706.

TALL AMUSING attractive sensuous and very successful man Bath/London 40 seeks a younger woman for discreet champagne cuddles and passionate pampering. If you would like some fun frolics and friendship please write with your telephone number to Box 3016.

OFFBEAT ARTISTIC strict graduate male (40, 6'3") seeks fun loving adventurous lady (London/Home Counties). Box 3116.

TWO MALE GRADUATES (20s) feel they need the instruction of an older woman. Photo appreciated. Mrs Robinsons please apply! Box 1117.

THIRTYISH, FORTYISH, spending lotsa time in Rotterdam/The Hague like me? Professional guy would appreciate your (ir)regular female company to explore local nightlife. Box 1717.

TALL, HANDSOME, married man wltm slim, attractive, married lady 35+ for discreet affair. Yorkshire area ono. Box 1817.

OFFBEAT BUSINESSMAN — homes Manchester and London, seeks bright, inquisitive, adventurous girlfriend for business, fun and travel. Photo essential. Box 1917.

HANDSOME HUNKY MALE — own business/home gsoh wltm gorgeous intelligent discerning female. Midlands. Box 2017.

MALE, 38, seeks light of his life — must have own pulse. Box 2117.

ASIAN PROFESSIONAL, 35, attached male, seeks liberated female for discreet amorous liaisons. Box 2217.

SOULMATE REQUIRED for positive attractiveish educatedish outgoing & fit male, 35, 6ft, own home, business, hair, teeth & cat. Successful applicants maybe bright, loquacious, long-nailed (!), philanthropic female. SW/anywhere. Box 2317. e-mail 101715.3565@compuserve.com

GOOD GENTLEMAN, unattached, thirties, successful, travelled, modest, wltm cute lady for laughter, fun and occasional spoiling. Humour personality essential. Location, age and status unimportant. Interesting smalls and thighs a bonus. Box 2417.

SEXY WOMAN, nice face, 37, seeks fun with warm strong man who enjoys lovemaking. Devon. Box 2517.

SHAPELY, ATTRACTIVE, mid-40s lady, likes sunshine, dancing, red wine, seeks tall, stylish, solvent NS 40s soulmate (SE). Box 2617.

LOVEABLE ROGUE seeks bored Cambridge housewife for libidinous lunchtime liaisons. Box 2717.

MATURE BUSINESSMAN seeks married woman wishing to have discreet affair. Box 3317.

GENTLEMAN, 58, married, seeks lively lady 35-55 for occasional lingering lunches. Southeast. Box 3417.

OUTRAGEOUS, SLUTTISH exhibitionist penpal-ess required. Box 1517.

HANDSOME, PROFESSIONAL male, 38, seeks submissive female for exciting times. SE/London. Box 3517.

LONDON MAN, 61, tall, slim, educated (but not intellectual snob), sensuous, WLTM woman, any age or shape, for afternoon cinema-going, etc. Box 4117.

LOOKING FOR enchantment — romantic, Celt, 30s, tall, slim, feminine, erudite, seeks sensual discreet man for fun and cherishing. SW. Box 4617.

ADVENTUROUS, ECCENTRIC, 29, seeks lass with silly soh for a bit of fun. Daft letter guarantees reply. Box 3617.

ROMANTIC, KIND divorced witty elegant handsome professional man, 46, interested most cultured pursuits needs lovely lady friend 19 to 45. Box 3717.

Replying to a PRIVATE EYE Box Number? Address your reply like this:

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6 CARLISLE STREET
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TALL, KIND goodfella, 41. Comfy pad. Knows claret from beaujolais, not charmless. Seeks affectionate, interesting woman. Box 3817.

VERY ATTRACTIVE, 52 year old professional woman seeks a warm, sensual relationship with a man on an occasional basis. Discretion assured. Box 3917.

ATTRACTIVE ACCOUNTANT, 6' easygoing 37 ns — enjoys laughing, keeping fit, theatre, travel, yoga, seeks slim/medium built woman, London/SE. Box 4017.

DOING ANYTHING this summer? Charming unattached expat, 37, fit, tall, looking for special, caring, fun-loving lady, late 20s-mid 30s, who appreciates the outdoors and good food/wine, to share adventures in romantic places. Location unimportant as travel frequently, but photo appreciated and ensures reply. Box 4217.

TALL, LATE 40s attached male with good but devilish sense of humour and lots of exciting but unprintable ideas seeks uninhibited (or inhibited but doesn't want to be) female for discreet exciting liaisons. Box 4517.

RAMPANT AFFECTIONATE countryman, 40s, attractive sensual creative discreet, seeks warm sexy bright slimmish woman with hidden wild streak to pleasure and entertain, London. Box 4717.

ATTACHED, ATTRACTIVE businessman, tall, dark and slim, mid-40s, with totally complicated life would like to meet pretty lady with same problem for uncomplicated liaison. Photo appreciated. West Yorkshire. Box 4817.

32 YEAR OLD MAN — funny, cultured, fading good-looks. Securely and happily attached but misses the thrill. Seeks lady friend for discreet, week-day evenings of un-complicated fun and flirting. Surrey/Hants and neighbouring areas. Box 5017.

VEGETARIAN MALE — solvent non-smoker early 50s seeks younger girlfriend. Box 5117.

EYE SOLDIER

FORCES PILOT — Bosnia, single, fit, handsome, seeks adventurous babe, 20-35, for fun times. Photo please. Box 1017.

Your Private Eye Valentine Messages ❤ 1997

❤ **STEPHEN** — the days we spend v'ere not made to end. I love you — CONSTANCE.

❤ **DOCTOR C** — many thanks for the heart treatment. More please! JUMBOMAN.

❤ **BELOVED PST** — whenever your stripes need oiling you know I'm always willing. All my love. P. xxxxx

❤ **MISS SCLAGEL** — let's buy Howard's End (and have a meadow of springer spaniels). Love from MR WILCOX.

❤ **ZOLA ATE** your Valentine card.

❤ **WIB-WOB** — no itches, just lots of love. You're VERY special and I love you, er, lots! Your "S". Always.

❤ **WHAT MID-LIFE CRISIS?** Love you All Ways. FAT NYMPHETTE.

❤ **POOH BUM** — fifteen out of ten for love, DOLLOP LUMP.

❤ **MARY** — even carwashers need love. Have my puppy. MR HAPPY.

❤ **WE LOVE YOU TOOTS** — Cosimo and Company.

❤ **FERGUS-?ONIONS** as prophylaxis or I start sending the cookery books section first. Love POLLY xxxxx.

❤ **DEAREST FLDM** — take me to heaven again (via the Dover!). ILYMTA CHES. X.

❤ **CAPITAINE** — you stimulate emotions waiting here inside. I love you. SOUS-FIFRE.

❤ **FIONIK** — I'll play mouth only tenderly. (Aptly apply to last Valentine's hairy gate delectability.) L'CHAIM!

❤ **MORE GORGEOUS BABE** — I will always love you. Light of your life, LIFT BOY.

❤ **JENNY** — you're gorgeous, indulge me. Be selfish — SI.

❤ **TIPPY** — my most f***able Irish fondling, meet you in the virtual stationery cupboard next Thursday at 1pm. Love P. XXXXX.

❤ **CERIAN** — please call me. PETE.

❤ **TO MY DARLING HELEN** — nnnh nnnh nnnh nnnh! Large Love.

❤ **PRINCESS** — love you. Peas and all. MIKE.

❤ **Aacilntt cginorss.** Eenstv aehv cdeinoprs aaginst. Aceeinpt XXXXX.

❤ **TO MRS TRUFFMUDDLE** — you're still my favourite cuddle bunny. Love from BANANA MAN.

❤ **POPPY** — I love you now, always and forever. P.

❤ **FLUFFY BUNNY** squidgy Valentine. Love you always.

❤ **EVILPIXIE** 4 maineroad.

❤ **SHERRY** — eagerly awaiting August. BALOO.

❤ **RE-OPENING SOON** — the PRINCESS of Hampstead's PATHETIC SHOP. Perhaps a joint venture this time? With love, WALLACE.

❤ **DR NO** — We love ewe, MISS MISSILE, PORKY and TAILBRAIN. XXXXX.

❤ **MOOSE** — I love you — MOOSISHKA.

❤ **1993** — In the beginning... In 94 she was 6m and we were 6m sleep deprived... In 1995 I forget... In 1996 ditto... In 1997 he is 7m, she is 3.5 and how I wish we could sleep...

❤ **STILL TICKING OVER** — my heart beat's for you...

❤ **A VALENTINE WISH** to the FAN-tastic bird of Linden Gardens.

❤ **DARLING LADY BEAR** Sheila I love you so much, I hope your Indian holiday is everything you wished and wanted, this may be our year. All my love, RICHARD.

❤ **RICHARD** — Ti amo. HEDGIE'S MUM.

❤ **HiG** — Original brown-eyes adores you still — despite squidgy bits/facial decoration.

❤ **CASCADE JONES!** Dinner at Allerton's, 9.30, love "MUSHPEA".

❤ **KATE WILL ALWAYS** love her MIGHTY THOR.

❤ **THIS TIME LAST** year — I had a bump and felt a frump, NOW he's a crawler and I am not much smaller.

❤ **BEANNIE, STILL DITTO** — nothing compares — BAGPUSS.

❤ **OOLIEWOOLIE** — the vet's coming to tickle your udders.

❤ **MY DEE** — I bloody love you and I've had a heart attack you know!

❤ **EM** — Oi you slag! You're gorgeous and I'd do anything for you (and Boris). Love you always. JIM.

❤ **ROSSELLA BRANDI** — Happy Valentine's you muppet.

❤ **YOU KNOW YOU'RE** my babes.

❤ **SUE** — continents, oceans, mountains, forests, beaches — tons, always BOB.

❤ **BEAUTIFUL WOMAN** — as you are my Antoinette, so I am your Jean Pierre and I live to share wine both red and white with you and to go down in brandy flames for you. I love you as you love me. FOREST FIGHTER PILOT.

❤ **TRACY** — I love you to the moon and back. ANDREW.

❤ **CHRISTOPHER B.** — It's true bald men are more sexy.

❤ **SEX KITTEN** — be mine always. Love RHINO. XXXXX.

❤ **BOLLOCKS TO** the poll tax.

❤ **DAVID LOVES** Melinda's morning perfume.

❤ **OH MOON OF MY** delight, oh very special Domestic Partner. You are my Valentine and will be until further notice.

❤ **SPOUSE CO-ORDINATOR** — more babies please!

❤ **VICTORIA AND ANTONIA** — It's OK to be gay.

❤ **COLIN** — Christina is still asking. It's not the 12th of never yet. Box No 5217

❤ **SOLO UNO** Antonio the Claret — Oceans of Love — Plum

❤ **CLAIRE P.** — Is it Bernie, Nick, Ray or me?

❤ **GROMIT** — my turn! Blankety Blank ?

❤ **MRS SOFT-BOTTOM** — of course I love you. P.D.

❤ **JULIE** — happy anniversary. I love you more than ever. MICK.

❤ **CELEB SAYS** fuck off would be better than this!

❤ **STEPHEN** — you've been Emma'd!! Pooh Bear fancies a cuddle.

❤ **IZABELA** — Crazy name, crazy girl.

❤ **LA SUBLIME** — when you smile the sun shines, the frost melts, Winter turns to Spring and the world becomes a beautiful place. Just like the beaches on South Salmon Island. You're Wonderful. Much love from LE RIDICULE.

❤ **RACHAEL MY STOKER** — here's to three Marples.

❤ **MAX C.** — After seven years why won't you marry me?

❤ **GEORGIE** — all my love always.

❤ **CUTE LITTLE CRACKER** — (1512) the anticipation just grows and grows — put me out of my misery — YOUR BIG YANK.

❤ **FRANKLIN** — throw away that Martha Stewart. All you need is me!

❤ **IAN M** — Hello dork, from VOVO.

❤ **WEIRDO** Pumpkinhead — you're too chubby — love you anyway. MRS SMACKABLE ARSE.

❤ **"BLACK WAS THE ROOT,** but milky white the flower", said RATTY.

❤ **TO MRS J** — My intelligent, beautiful, secret! Valentine. With love and kisses. A. XXXXX.

"Wow! It's from me!"

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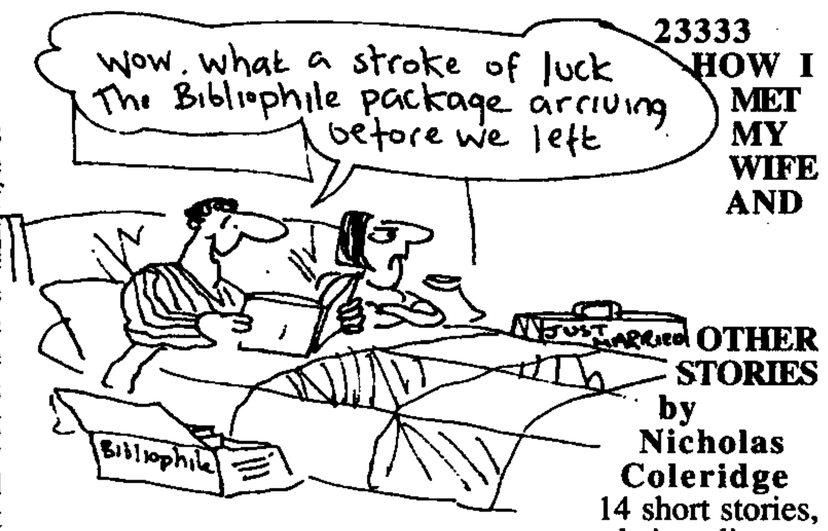

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